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CHRIST
THE CREATIVE IDEAL

STUDIES IN COLOSSIANS AND EPHESIANS

BY

REV. W. L. WALKER

AUTHOR OF "THE SPIRIT AND THE INCARNATION"
"CHRISTIAN THEISM AND A SPIRITUAL MONISM"
ETC. ETC.

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PREFACE

THE motive of this book is the same as animated the writer's previous publications, viz. the desire to present Christianity in such a way as is in harmony with our modern knowledge, and so as to commend it to those especially who are at present in doubt or difficulty concerning it, or wholly indifferent to it. The teaching of Colossians and Ephesians seems to offer a basis for such a presentation of the great Christian truths, because, in Colossians especially, Christ and all that was done and is yet to be done in and through Him, are carried back to the Creation of the World and to God's Eternal purpose therein. An endeavour is therefore made to show how we have thus in Christ the revelation of the mystery of human life and destiny; how Christ appears on the lines of the creative and educative action of God in Nature and in man; what Christ is to us to-day; what the Church is meant to be to Him; what the Christian "Hope of Glory" is; and how the Eternal Purpose of God in Creation and Redemption shall yet be completely fulfilled. The last chapter of the book has not been lightly written. It gives expression to that which seems the necessary conclusion from the teaching of these Epistles as well as from the conception of God as the Infinite Reason and Love and the Father of men.

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While there is at present much earnest and effective Christian life and action amongst us, and most laudable endeavours are made for the enlightenment and conversion of those in non-Christian lands, there is also on the part of all classes a serious falling off from the Christian faith and from all interest in religion, a state of matters which demands more attention than it receives from the Christian Churches.

If Christianity is to be placed on the securest foundations, its *oneness with the Creation* must be shown, and all suspicion of disharmony with Science removed. If religion is to be revived, God as Creator and Father, as well as Redeemer, must be seen in such a character as shall attract men's interest and inspire their love and devotion to Him and His cause—which is really our own; and the religion to which we are called in Christ must be recognised as Divinely natural—that which at once manifests our Ideal and makes its attainment possible for all, individually and socially, for time and for Eternity.

Of course, with respect to some things we can only see "in a mirror darkly," we can only "know in part"; yet we can know sufficient for practical purposes, and it is for each of us to try to see as clearly and to report as truthfully as he can.

W. L. W.

Fernihirst, Shettleston, Glasgow,
September 1913.

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CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	Introductory	1
II.	The "Revelation of the Mystery"	11
III.	How the Revelation was made	19
IV.	Man's Destiny revealed in Christ—Belief in Christ's Resurrection, and our Present Relation to it—The Revelation given in the Life	28
V.	The Person of Christ: The Cosmic Christ	45
VI.	How the Ideal was realised—Christ and Ourselves—Advantages of the View suggested—Note on Theories of Heredity	68
VII.	The "Reconciliation of all Things" in Christ—Of Man to God and of Man to Man—Freedom through the Cross	98
VIII.	The "Fulness of God" in Christ: Present Relation of Christ to God and to Ourselves	119
IX.	The New Life	140
X.	"The Church" as the Body of Christ	158
XI.	The "Hope of Glory"	182
XII.	The Wider Reference: Fulfilment of the "Eternal Purpose"	204
	Index	232

ERRATA.

Page 66, fifth line from bottom, He *should be* Him.

Page 100, ninth line from bottom, katallasso *should be* katallassō.

CHRIST
THE CREATIVE IDEAL

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

THE Epistles to the Colossians and Ephesians contain the loftiest and widest conceptions of Christianity, resting at the same time on such a basis as suggests how these may be effectually commended to the modern mind and be made helpful to all Christian believers. These Epistles—which are manifestly closely related—have been too much neglected. Perhaps this has been partly due to the very height and width of their teaching. Their representation of Christ has seemed too high, and the cosmical relations affirmed of Him too wide, to apply to One who appeared in human flesh. The Eternal Purpose of God declared in them has seemed too great to be realised. A reason also for their neglect in recent

times has been the doubts entertained with respect to their authorship. Various indications—especially what seemed references to Gnosticism in Colossians —have led many scholars to doubt or deny their Pauline authorship, and to bring down the date of their composition to a later time.

Into the critical question it is not necessary for our purpose to enter. The real question concerning these and other writings is not so much, Who wrote them? as, Are they true? Do they state what we can to-day confidently receive as Truth? No doubt in St. Paul we see a man specially inspired. But his special inspiration was due to his special susceptibility for such inspiration, and to the particular experiences through which he passed. The Spirit was not given to some men exclusively, but to the Church at large. In these Epistles prayer is offered on behalf of *all* Christians, that they may be filled with spiritual wisdom and understanding. If there were others besides St. Paul who possessed a special capacity for such illumination, spiritual truth could be conveyed through them as well as through him. It would only show how real were the Spirit's influences, and how divinely wide their distribution. It is admitted on all hands that we do not know for certain the authors of several of the New Testament books, *e.g.*, Hebrews and the Fourth Gospel, and it would be a serious loss to the Christian Church if the spiritual value of

these writings depended on certainty as to their authorship.

At the same time, the present tendency of scholarship is to regard these Epistles as being Pauline, at least in substance, and to look upon their Christology as a natural development of that which we find in the earlier Epistles. With respect to Colossians, recent criticism goes farther and tends to ascribe this letter more directly to St. Paul. Better knowledge has shown that the supposed references to later Gnosticism may be fully met by relating them to certain Jewish beliefs, influenced to some extent by non-Jewish thought, or to the beginnings of what found later fuller development (see *Colossians*, by Williams, in *Cambridge Greek Test.*). Its connection with the undoubtedly genuine letter to Philemon also makes for its genuineness.

It must be admitted that there is a real difference in the style and tone of these Epistles from what we find in the other acknowledged writings of St. Paul (there is a considerable number of new words in both); but this may be accounted for by the employment of another hand in their actual composition. The words at the close of Colossians: "The salutation of me, Paul, with mine own hand," show that Paul did not actually *write* that letter. But the thoughts may be his, and if so, they are probably his latest, which gives them a special interest for us.

Ephesians seems to have been a kind of circular letter sent to various Churches in Asia Minor; it is therefore more general in its terms. This was probably "the Epistle from Laodicea" which the Colossians were to read. But "whether our Ephesians is this companion letter or only a deutero-Pauline production, formed on the basis of some genuine letter written on this occasion, is a disputed point among critics" (Prof. Bacon, *The Making of the New Testament*, p. 98). The references to the Church in it show that it belongs to a period when there was as yet no such ecclesiastical institution as we find in the Ignatian letters. This fact points to an early date; but as a whole it is less certainly the direct production of St. Paul than is Colossians.

We shall, provisionally at least, speak of St. Paul as the author of both Epistles. But we would repeat, that what we are most concerned for is not the question of their authorship, but that of the truth of their contents. Whatever authority may be ascribed to St. Paul, the want of absolute certainty as to their authorship shows this to be the really important thing.

In these Epistles, proceeding most probably from his Roman prison, St. Paul gives full and exultant expression to that "wisdom of God," or, as we should say to-day, "Divine Philosophy," which he had informed the Corinthians he possessed, but was

unable to impart to them because of their low spiritual condition (1 Cor. ii. 6 f., iii. 1-3). What he had heard of the Colossian and other Christians to whom these letters were sent, made him feel that they were better prepared to receive this higher teaching, and, in the false teaching that was being introduced amongst them, occasion had arisen for impressing this higher knowledge on them: "Having heard," he says to the Colossians, "of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have towards all the saints (the people of God), because of the hope which is laid up for you in the heavens" (i. 4, 5). The questions which had unsettled and divided the Corinthians, keeping them on a lower spiritual level, were evidently settled amongst those to whom he now writes; the unity of the Church was to some extent at least realised by them; Jew and Gentile met on equal footing; their love went out to *all* the people of God, and their minds were fixed on heavenly things. In like manner, he tells the Ephesians how he had heard of "their faith in the Lord Jesus, and the love they showed toward *all* the saints," which led him to pray for their complete illumination through the Spirit (Eph. i. 15 f.).

He evidently felt that he could not only speak freely to them, but exult in that "Mystery of the Gospel" which he had mentioned in his previous letters to other Churches, but had never yet fully

expounded in all its Divine breadth and length, and height and depth. It is the revelation of this mystery, with all that is involved in it, that is the leading theme of both Epistles. In Colossians it is stated with special reference to Christ's relation to God and the Creation, and in Ephesians, to His relation to the Church. Their author is carried beyond the temporal into the realm of the eternal. He has a vision of the great Divine Thought and Purpose to which the creation itself is due. In these Epistles we have presented such a Divine Philosophy of the Universe, such a reading of its "riddle," such a conception of Christ in relation to God and man, and of the unity of mankind in that higher humanity which was eternally conceived "in Christ," and in due time manifested in Him, and such a picture of the ultimate goal of the creation, with the power that dwells in Christ for its realisation, as gives to those who can receive it a satisfaction, a peace, a hope, an inspiration, which neither science, dealing only with material things, the real nature, essence, or origin of which it does not even profess to know, nor a philosophy based on merely human speculation, continually met by contrary reasons, can ever give.

While we do not confine our consideration of those Epistles to an apologetic interest merely, we would keep specially in view, in dealing with this Pauline teaching, the question whether we can see it to be

true in substance for ourselves to-day. The subject, as will appear, is one not of theoretical interest merely, but of great practical importance. We may find, indeed, in these Epistles such a conception of Christ and Christianity, and of the Divine purpose in the creation, as shall go far to provide that larger Gospel for which many Christian hearts are yearning, which it is felt *must* be contained in Christ if only we can grasp it; one in harmony with all scientific truth, and one which seems to be so necessary for that revived interest in religion which is such a desideratum of the present time.

The need is very great, if we will but face the facts. The times are critical for the Faith. "The majority of thinking people in the Christian countries," it has been said with only too much truth, "are at present without a philosophy. The heavens are as brass. They look down impatiently on "the fool at his devotions," yet they feel the inadequacy of a materialistic science to satisfy the soul's demands. They have been driven from the ancient moorings and are adrift on dark and stormy waters, with no glimmer of a friendly harbour-light in sight. Many of them wish, with an intense longing, that they could return to the faith in which they were nurtured" (J. Arthur Hill, in *Religion and Modern Psychology*). With not a few, Christianity is regarded as "played out." They tell us they are

weary of "mythology and metaphysics," and of doctrines that seem to be all in the air. "Dogma," the writer just quoted affirms, "is being not so much disproved as outgrown. The *Zeitgeist* has set its face in another direction, and those who cling to dogmatic formulations will be left behind." The life has gone out of the movement and only the shell is left. "The Spirit moves on." For some, morality and humanity have taken the place of religion. Both essentially belong to religion, but neither, nor both together, can ever form a substitute for it. With some, Socialism or Social Service is made a religion; with others, Spiritualism. Some are seeking refuge in various forms of non-Christian Mysticism; withdrawing into themselves, they think they find God; while others fly to Theosophy, Christian Science, or to some of the varieties of the "New Thought," or of the Occult. We have even agencies for the spread of Mohammedanism and Buddhism. The greater number of Christian people are quite content to take their religion without troubling themselves about its present-day adequacy or its foundations. They are "practical believers," and, doubtless, many of them give a good account of their faith by their works. But this indifference cannot last. It may do for them, and possibly for some of their children, but unless something effective be done to show the reasonableness and sound

foundations of our Faith, the drift away from Christianity will continue, and future generations will find themselves in increasing unsettlement. The hope of many earnest Christians is placed in a fresh spiritual revival. This is needed. But, as Isaac Taylor has said: "There is an outer-work that must precede an inner Christian movement. There must be a clear ground of reason on which the convictions of the few who think must be made to rest" (*Essays*, etc., p. 338). Of the present, the Principal of Mansfield College, says: "Men are casting about them on every side for some standing-ground. They have no strong convictions . . . our present distress is ultimately due to theological unsettlement" (Paper read to National Free Church Council, 1913). By some it is deemed impossible to harmonise our Christian Faith with the view of the world which modern knowledge gives us. But unless this can be done, unbelief or want of confidence will deepen and extend till, for a time, a practical Agnosticism will hold the field. This *must* be the result if Christianity and Science cannot be seen to be at one; for, in the conflict between Science and religious beliefs, Science has always proved the stronger. It is true that this conflict is not being waged to-day as it once was, but the effects of it remain. There is an underlying feeling of want of harmony.

Of course, the heart is greater than the intellect, and we may find "reasons of the heart" by which to hold when those of the Intellect are failing us. But this is a one-sided and insecure state of matters. The tendency to belittle the Intellect or the Reason is a most ominous sign of the times. Surely the thing to aim at is

> "That mind and soul according well,
> May make one music as before,
> But vaster."

CHAPTER II

THE REVELATION OF THE MYSTERY

LET us begin with "the revelation of the mystery" which has such a prominent place in these Epistles. In this we shall see that we have the great mystery of human life itself revealed,—the meaning and mode of the "revelation" will appear immediately. St. Paul says (Col. i. 25 f.) that his mission was "to fulfil the word of God, (even) the mystery which hath been hid for ages and generations: but now hath it been manifested to his saints." "Mystery" means here, clearly, something that had been hidden but was now made known. We are familiar with the word in its modern sense; we say truly that we are surrounded by mystery on every hand. Wherever we look, into whatever we penetrate, with the utmost skill we possess, and with our most efficient aids for exploring the distant or the minute, we find ultimately insoluble mystery. Man is a mystery to himself, and equally so to him is the universe to which he belongs; he cannot give an ultimate explanation of even the simplest thing

therein. There were also Greek religious "mysteries," into which men had to be initiated. But there need be no special reference to these here, although there are expressions in Colossians which may indicate an acquaintance on Paul's part with these. Jesus had also spoken of "the mysteries of the kingdom," which were only understood by those belonging to it. There are other particular mysteries mentioned in the New Testament. But when *the* mystery is spoken of, "the mystery of the Gospel," the mystery that had been hidden from all the ages, the great mystery of the Divine Eternal Purpose now made known—the immediate reference is to *the calling of the Gentiles to membership in the kingdom of God*, with all that is implied in this, the extension to *them* of the blessings of the Gospel, the constituting them the people of God as truly as the Jews, who believed themselves to be exclusively such, the extension to the Gentile nations of that Divine Election which had hitherto been held to embrace only the seed of Abraham, their interest in the Christ, which had been deemed a specially Jewish possession.

This appears very clearly in the Epistle to the Ephesians. There, in chap. iii. 1 f., St. Paul describes himself as "the prisoner of Christ Jesus in behalf of you Gentiles," to whom "by revelation was made known the mystery—the mystery of Christ—which in other generations was not made known unto the

sons of men, as it has now been revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit (to wit); *that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs* and fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel." To him was the grace "given to preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery which for ages hath been hid in God who created all things—according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." In almost identical words (already partly quoted), we have in Colossians the mystery described as "the dispensation of God which was given me to you-ward, to fulfil the word of God, (even) the mystery which hath been hid for ages and generations: but now hath it been manifested to his saints, to whom God was pleased to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. i. 25–27; cf. Eph. i. 9, vi. 19; Col. iv. 3; Rom. xi. 25, xvi. 25, 26; 1 Cor. ii. 5 f., etc.).

The mystery now disclosed, therefore, was the Divine purpose concerning the Gentiles, and as the world was divided into Jew and Gentile—the latter term embracing all who were not Jews—it is the revelation of the purpose of God concerning *the world*—all mankind, and so, the revelation of the

mystery of human life. Prior to Christ the Jews were believed (by themselves at least) to be the only people of God, the only people for whom God had a purpose; if others were to share in His purpose they must become Jews. What the relation of the rest of mankind—the great mass of humanity—was to God, what was their fate or destiny, was a great mystery: it was something as yet unrevealed. It must have seemed such to thoughtful minds even among the Jews, although they had their theories concerning it; and the revelation that came in Christ would be gladly hailed by minds freed from the national exclusiveness. When the *Gentiles* as well as the Jews were seen to be embraced in an eternal good purpose of God, there shone forth the revelation of the mystery of the Divine meaning and purpose in human life at large—of the meaning and purpose of the creation. It came therefore to St. Paul as a *great* revelation. It was this that he so gloried to proclaim as the universal good news. It was this that made him feel that he was a "debtor to the Greek and the Barbarian." It was for *this* that he evoked the enmity of his Jewish co-religionists, who followed him with persecution all his days. It was for this that he was now, as he says, "an ambassador in bonds," praying "that he might be able to speak boldly as he ought to speak," in spite of all opposition. We see in this light what a great apostle was St. Paul, with what a

message of glad tidings for *the world* he felt himself charged, and how self-sacrificingly he pressed on to deliver it. It is a message the full import of which we have scarcely yet apprehended.

Apart from the revelation in this Gospel, there is no greater mystery than that of human life as a whole. It was one that the greatest minds of the pre-Christian world could not penetrate, before which all their powers were baffled: it is a mystery still to every mind that turns away from the revelation given in Christ. It is the sealed Book that only one could open. We do not perhaps think so much about it as we should: we are kept so busy with our immediate personal concerns. But if we do ponder it seriously, the vision of humanity that arises before us is a perplexing one, in some aspects an appalling one; it is one before which we stand dumb. Here we are all Agnostics. We see generation after generation of human beings appearing on this earth, passing across it, as it were, with mingled experiences of joy and sorrow—often with more sorrow than joy. To not a few life seems something to be endured rather than enjoyed; to some it is dark with tragedy, and to *all* it seems to end in the cold grave or silent tomb. Some move along cheerily and thoughtlessly, recking nothing of the future; others trudge on slowly, stooping under heavy burdens of care: to some life seems an opportunity to grasp all they can get, to

others it is a dull round of hopeless toil, costing a struggle even to exist. And we witness all this great procession, constantly succeeding those who have gone before, marching on whether they will or not, and passing at length into the utterly unknown as if they dropped into a deep unfathomable chasm on the outermost verge of the world. Where do they go? We can follow them no farther. What becomes of them? What does it all mean? What sense has there been in their existence? What purpose in their creation? The mystery is deepened when we remember that not only for the individual is death inevitable, but for the race. No light on the ultimate meaning of human life can be found from its contemplation on the earth merely. We may conceivably reach at some far distant time the perfection of Humanity on the earth; but what of the myriads who have passed away? What of the millions more who must follow them before this ideal perfection can be attained? The perfect world we labour for can only be enjoyed by a mere fraction of Humanity. Not only so: it cannot *last*. The race itself must die. The earth must become cold, unfit to be the scene of human life. What meaning, what ultimate reason is there in it all, since all must perish at last? Even were the cycle to be renewed in some way, it would bring us no relief. This mystery of human

life faces us to-day, and, with our more developed sympathies, presses more heavily than ever on our hearts. If it be indeed revealed in Christ, no revelation, no discovery, can be so welcome, and He in whom it is made surely stands in a unique relation to the human race. If this be revealed in the Gospel, —that indeed which makes it the universal Gospel— we may well feel as Paul felt concerning it.

What, then, is the Christian revelation? What light for all comes from that disclosure of the hidden purpose of God which so fills and uplifts the mind and heart of Paul, which made those early Christians sing for joy and brave torture and cruellest death without fear? What solution of the great mystery of life has Christianity to-day to offer the world? Wonderful it is, if true. It may seem incredible, but it is this, that man's Divinely intended destiny is "glory"; *that all were created by God for Sonship to Himself and for an inheritance in His eternal and perfected Kingdom.* Not for merely earthly joy or sorrow, not to be the mere sport of circumstance, or, rising higher, to be crushed at length under the unbending necessities of the laws of matter; not for death and nothingness, or for any dark doom, but for "*glory.*" "God," says the Apostle, "was pleased to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, *the hope of glory.*"

This, of course, is in itself nothing new; but what we wish specially to bring out is its truth and certainty, with its implications. We must ask next, therefore, on what ground does this affirmation rest? for on the reply to this depends our ability to accept it as true.

CHAPTER III

HOW THE REVELATION WAS MADE

HOW was the Christian revelation of this mystery made? How did the illumination come to the Christian mind—whether of Paul or of any other? There is the greater need for considering this because of the false conceptions of the nature and mode of "revelation" that are current. With some the distinction between "natural" and "revealed" religion is so sharply made, and the evidences of revealed religion deemed so inadequate, that the latter is ruled out of consideration, or left to those who are supposed to lack the courage of applying reason to religion, who walk with half-closed eyes "by faith." This is specially noticeable in discussions concerning the future of Humanity; any light that Christianity may have thrown on the subject is ignored because it belongs to that uncertain thing "revealed religion." It seems to be supposed that the "revelation" is believed to have come only by a voice from another sphere, by the direct speaking of God or of Divine or angelic Beings, as

Mohammed claimed for the Koran; or else that it came by means of some quite exceptional kind of inspiration; which, while it may give the recipient a certainty that cannot be questioned, has only an individual value (see James' *Varieties of Religious Experience*).

But these are all misconceptions so far as the revelation which we have here to do with is concerned. Paul, indeed, says to the Ephesians, "by revelation was made known unto me the mystery." But how did that revelation come to Paul? No doubt it was through spiritual illumination. But the source of that illumination, the centre from which it proceeded, was *Jesus Christ in His life on earth in human form.* That is to say, the revelation came through one belonging to our Humanity. It was given in terms of human life. It was spoken, not by words from Heaven, or in words at all, but in actual, living, human deed. It was a normal expression of a human life under the influence of that Power which has ever been deepest of all in the world, carrying onwards and upwards mankind. It is *Divine* revelation, "supernatural," if we choose to use that somewhat confusing word, but none the less "natural," not to be distinguished from what is the Divinely natural manifestation in Humanity. When in other great Personalities in history we see qualities manifested which are beyond the common, we do not separate

these Personalities from the rest of mankind, but see in them something belonging to *man.* Similarly, whatever is manifested in Jesus Christ, however marvellous it may seem, however much above what is witnessed in other men, and in whatever way we may describe His Person, was all done in and by the *man* Jesus Christ.

What Christians were led to see in Jesus was *the true life of man represented for all men.* These Epistles show this very plainly. For them there was no longer "Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bondman, freeman, but *Christ* is all and in all." The true *man* appeared in Christ, man according to the mind of God, man as he existed in the Divine Eternal Thought and Purpose, man no longer "after the flesh," but after "the Spirit." This was "the new man that is after God created in righteousness and holiness of truth" (Eph. iv. 24). It was this *new man* that the Apostles preached and called on all men to become conformed to: "whom we proclaim, admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man *perfect in Christ*" —complete in that true manhood revealed in Him. For this the various ministries of the Christian Church were constituted; "for the perfecting of the saints (and *all* might now be embraced in that once exclusively Jewish term), unto the building up of the

Body of Christ (which "the Church" is, to membership in which all are now called), till we all attain unto the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. iv. 9–14). It was *Christ* in them—His true life living in them and conforming them to Himself—that was "the hope of glory." Hence the many exhortations to "put off the old man" and "put on the new man," to seek earnestly to realise the same kind of life as was revealed in Christ, and the assurances that there was a sufficient Divine Power within them to enable them so to live.

This is the great, primary, and outstanding fact in Christianity—the revelation of *the true life of man in Christ.* All else stands in the closest relation to this. And the way in which this revelation came to men, and the ground of our confidence in it, is simply the fact of Christ as the manifestation of *man* in his true, Divinely-intended life. The knowledge rests on that which was realised and manifested in an actual human person.

One cannot help feeling that it is much to be regretted that Christ has not always been *primarily* viewed and presented as *the true man.* As we shall see, it is in this true manhood that His Deity is revealed. It is in this, too, that His claim on our attention and for our reception of Him consists. It

is as "the man Christ Jesus" He appears before us and claims our following. His Messiahship is seen by Paul ultimately to resolve itself into His Sonship to God, and the reconciliation of all men to God therein. But He has been too frequently presented first on His Divine side, and for that reason the real ground of His unique relation to man, and of the "revelation" made in Him, has been obscured. The consequences have also been evil practically. Because the call to the true life of man as manifested in Him has not been made *primary*, men have often failed to see clearly what the Christian Salvation means, or why they need it. They have been called upon to be "saved," without its having been made plain to them that what they needed to be saved from was "the old man"—the lower self—in us all. What Christ has done to reconcile us to God has been dwelt on, without its being shown that to be individually reconciled to God is to be brought to the true life which God means for man. Men have been asked and pleaded with to "believe in Christ," to "receive Christ," without any clear understanding of what believing in or receiving Christ means. Hence the comparatively poor representation of life in its truth that has been made in general, and the failure to commend Christ to the world at large, the effects of which are manifest in present-day indifference to all religion. Christ *did*, as we shall see, represent

man as reconciled to God, through which we receive the forgiveness of sins; but it was by standing before God as man in his truth and representing on His Cross the death of "the flesh," that we "should no longer live to ourselves, but to Him Who died for us." To receive Christ is to receive Him as our *life* —as manifesting man's true life and as reconciling us to God in His own life and death. Hence the exhortation: "As ye therefore received Jesus Christ, the Lord, (so) walk ye in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in your faith." And again: "Be ye therefore imitators of God as beloved children, and walk in love, even as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odour of a sweet smell" (Eph. v. 1, 2). This alone is Christianity—living in love as Christ did; for this life in love is the true life of man and the life of God in man.

Let Jesus Christ be held forth as *the true man*, with all that this means for men, and men called on to receive Him as such; let it be made clear that *this* is the Christian call, and such life the only salvation, and we shall be on the way to secure the much needed and long talked of revival of *religion.* Religion means union with God, and the only possible union with Him is in spirit and life. A man only comes into union with God as he makes God's thought regarding him his own thought and ideal

in life. It was this that Paul saw manifested in Christ, and he therefore beheld therein the revelation of God's thought and purpose for human life.

There is more yet to be said; but this much is clear, that the revelation given in Christ is one that we can receive with full confidence and one that appeals to all; for it was given, not in any exceptional or questionable manner, but in a living member of our common humanity expressing the true and Divinely intended life of man.

How its *Truth* was recognised

But it will be asked, How did Christian men *know* that what they saw in Christ was the true life of man? They knew it just as we may all know it. The answer may be given in Paul's words: it "commended itself to every man's conscience in the sight of God." The truth was only hid from those who were "perishing," because the light that enlightens every man had been quenched within them. Man is so constituted that he recognises the truth of himself, his ideal, what he ought to be, when it stands before him. His lips may not confess it, nor his practice follow it, but his conscience—his inner sense—responds. Mostly all men recognise that Truth as it shines in Jesus Christ. Amidst all the questions that are raised by criticism, Jesus Christ stands forth

as *the man* amongst men. As Dr. Samuel Davidson, one of the most fearless and thorough-going of critics, wrote in the last edition of his *Introduction to the New Testament*: "A mystic haze encompasses the person, life, and discourses of Jesus; and sober criticism must set about the task of removing it reverently, respecting tradition without superstitiously adopting it. After this is done, there stands forth in colours more or less distinct, a person such as the world never saw before—the living type of an ideal humanity, pure and sinless, destined to influence all times, to purify all people among whom His name is known, and to ennoble His followers by lifting them towards a measure of His stature" (vol. i. p. 314). To which we may add the recent words of a critical theologian. Writing of "Religious Life in Germany," Professor Weinel says: "To us—Jesus has given His life, radiant with goodness and with a love extending beyond all limited human morality, so that for us nothing else remains possible than to live for this ideal and to believe in the God who has made Himself known in Jesus" (*Hibbert Journal*, July 1909).

Jesus Christ has impressed Himself on the world as the true man in a way that can never be forgotten. Wherever the Christian truth has reached He is known as such, however little heeded He may be practically. Even those who do not profess the

Christian faith know what it should mean to be a Christian, and perforce admire the Christ-like character. The Church is criticised by her opponents for her lack of Christ-likeness. In mass meetings men and women who have broken with all forms of religion acclaim the name of Jesus. If we think simply of the life of Christ as one of perfect love, quite apart from all disputed details, we have in it the *ideal* before which all must bow. It claims us, commands us, and, think as we may, we cannot conceive aught that is higher or better. It is the life toward which we are all being moved even in the course of natural evolution, the life in which alone men can be brothers, or humanity be really that united family which surely it ought to be.

Here then, we repeat, is the source of the affirmation that the mystery of the meaning of human life was revealed in Jesus Christ: it was so because in Him that true life was manifested to which every normal conscience must respond. But in order to be the complete revelation of the mystery of man's life, it must also be that of his ultimate destiny—beyond bodily death—and we must now show how that was given in the truly human life of Christ.

CHAPTER IV

MAN'S DESTINY REVEALED IN CHRIST—BELIEF IN THE RESURRECTION, AND OUR PRESENT RELATION TO IT—THE REVELATION GIVEN IN THE LIFE

AS we shall see, the life that was manifested in Christ necessarily implies a high destiny for man beyond time and sense. Such a destiny is implied also in the "glory" that sums up the Christian hope: "Christ in you the hope of glory." This glory is, of course, something to be attained in a life beyond the present. Let us ask now how this consummating revelation came to those first Christians, and how it comes to ourselves. How did those Christian believers gain this assurance? In these Epistles, as elsewhere, it rests on a twofold basis: (1) Belief in the resurrection of Christ; (2) the consciousness of a present living relation to Christ.

Belief in the Resurrection of Christ

As is said in Ephesians i. 20, their hope had its strength in the manifestation of "the might of God

which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and made Him sit at His right hand in the heavenly places"; they were "made alive together with Christ," "raised up with Him, and made to sit with Him in the heavenly places" (ii. 5–7). And in Colossians we read that they were "raised with Him through faith in the working of God who raised Him from the dead" (ii. 12; cf. ver. 13 and chap. iii. 1). The resurrection of Christ had thus a very important place in the faith and hope of these Christians.

Belief in the resurrection of Christ is still the chief ground of confidence with the generality of Christians, and although, for our present purpose, we cannot build on the "Resurrection" as that term is commonly understood, we are far from having any desire to belittle that confidence. It is a way of apprehending a great *fact* which, amidst all criticism, remains unshaken, namely, the continued life and activity of Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. But confidence in this fact is supposed to rest on the narratives of the resurrection which we have in the Gospels; and, while many are still able to receive implicitly these narratives—although they may not always kindle in their hearts the glow of our earlier Easter hymns—with an increasing number it is very different. These narratives have been so criticised that—although they may not have been discredited—

the old confidence in them has been largely lost, and the resurrection has become a subject for question and discussion rather than a luminous revelation. Whatever may be the truth concerning these narratives, it is necessary to show that our Christian faith and hope do not depend on them.

Much labour has been given to the endeavour to elucidate the actual facts belonging to that which we commonly speak of as "the resurrection of Christ." All are agreed to-day that the first disciples were firmly convinced of its reality, and that this conviction was, largely, the foundation of that which we know as the Christian religion. They must also have had what was for *them* adequate grounds for a belief that carried so much and that had such an uplifting influence upon them. But as respects the nature of the grounds of their belief and of the resurrection itself—whether it was a bodily or a spiritual one, with perhaps some kind of personal manifestation to His disciples, investigators who must be credited with equal honesty are far from being agreed. While some still maintain that the resurrection was in the body that had been laid in the tomb, through, perhaps, the power of that Divine Spirit that so fully possessed Christ and was manifested in exceptional ways during His life; others hold that He passed immediately into a higher life in God—quite irrespective of the earthly body, and

that either He was able to manifest Himself to His disciples in a spiritual body, or that they had visions of Him alive (as St. Paul had), whether of an objective or a subjective origin. By some it is held that the narratives of the appearances, instead of representing the grounds of their faith, were the results—the materialisations of their faith, which itself rested on their experiences of contact with the great Personality of Christ, and that, whatever visions they may have had were valid for themselves only. As Dr. Martineau remarks: "Not only do I conceive that the disciples' visions of him as risen depend on their entrancement by his transcendent Personality, and could never have visited them had he been of lower spiritual stature; but I also admit that for us these visions cannot in themselves serve as objective proofs of his immortal life—their validity is simply for the persons to whom they were present" (*The Seat of Authority in Religion*, p. 376. See also Harnack's *What is Christianity?* and other recent writers).

It would do no good to discuss the subject here, because we wish to affirm only what can be universally received. If we must go into an examination of the evidences, and of the reasons for and against the various positions adopted by modern scholars respecting the resurrection—matters filling volumes of what is often intricate discussion—before we can come to a properly sifted conclusion, we could scarcely

speak of the Resurrection as being a *revelation* of man's destiny for ourselves to-day. We cannot found upon it as the first disciples may have done. We may hold with personal conviction any one of the various theories; but we cannot say that others *ought* to believe as we do. We may believe that certain of the first disciples and St. Paul beheld such "appearances" as were to them convincing proofs of the continued and exalted life of their Lord, and that they were meant to be such; but *we* have no such visions, and it was not till Paul saw, as he believed, Christ for himself that he was convinced. It is said that the Resurrection was God's way of convincing the disciples of the Messiahship of Jesus after the crucifixion, which seemed the refutation of it. It *may* have been so. But was it the only possible way? May it not have been through *spiritual* illumination? While we put away from us all presuppositions as to what may or may not have been possible, yet, with the narratives of the event which we possess, it may be impossible for even the most unbiassed seeker to come to a positive conclusion; and, so far as external proofs are concerned, it may be purposely meant to be so. We cannot place ourselves in the position of these first disciples: what was evidence for them might not, even could we know it for certain, be evidence for us. They breathed a different intellectual atmosphere. They

believed, not only in the resurrection of Christ, but in His coming again to earth in manifested "glory," when they should also be "manifested with Him in glory." The Resurrection had thus for them a significance which it does not have for us.

Belief in a *Hereafter* for man does not rest on the resurrection of Christ, although to the Christian disciples it may have been a manifestation of it. To many amongst ourselves to-day it would be a welcome proof even of survival. Psychical research, on the other hand, hopes by means of the evidences of survival which it gathers to make the resurrection of Christ more credible. The belief in survival grew up in men's minds under various influences. It was held—although perhaps loosely—by the main portion of the Jews in our Lord's time, and by many of the Greeks and Romans. He Himself affirmed the survival of the soul, and faith in that fact was, so far, the ground of His confidence in His return after death. "Fear not," He said, "them that can kill the body, but cannot kill the soul," and to the dying robber He gave the assurance, "This day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." The Pharisees, and apparently the most of the people, believed also in a "resurrection at the last day." Our Lord affirmed this in His answer to the Sadducees, and spoke of it as the prelude to the inheritance of the Kingdom of God. The disciples shared in these

beliefs, and to them the resurrection of their Master was not the return to life of one who was wholly *dead*, but the re-appearing in bodily form of one who had survived death and entered on a higher life, such as became the Messiah, one in which they should in some measure share. Jesus in His Personality did not *die*,—the death was that of the body of flesh merely: the question of the Resurrection really affects only the *appearances* of Christ after death, and it had, as we have said, a special significance for those who looked forward to an immortal life on a renewed earth in glorified bodies with Christ as their Lord.

The fact just mentioned—that the Personality of Jesus did not *die* when His body ceased to fulfil its vital functions, seems sometimes to be strangely forgotten or obscured in discussions concerning the Resurrection. When it is said that "He could not be holden of death," it is surely forgotten that no *spiritual* being can be so. Besides, to Christian faith Jesus Christ was Divine as truly as human, God as well as man, in one undivided Person. Is it not incongruous to suppose that one who was God as truly as man ever really entered the sepulchre as a dead person? It could only be the man: where then was the God? The truth is, that Christ as a Spiritual Personality in no form entered the sepulchre. If the Personality of Christ could again

in some way re-unite itself with the dead body—re-vitalising it—that Personality must have existed in an effective form quite apart from the body. The representation in the New Testament generally is that "*God* raised Him from the dead," but if this be taken to mean the re-vivification of His earthly body,—a body which never "saw corruption"—we should fall into such a materialistic conception of the relations of soul to body as would leave no hope for those whose bodies did "see corruption" or were reduced to ashes in the fire, or otherwise dissolved. *Such* a bodily resurrection could give no promise of ours.

The main question for ourselves to-day is not, How did the first disciples come to believe in the manifestation of man's destiny in Christ? but, How can *we* see it? In one sense, of course, we cannot see it. *We* have no *visions* of the risen Christ granted us. We are thrown back upon *faith*, and it is meant that we should be so. Even if the Gospel narratives furnished such adequate *proofs* as would gain our confident belief, we should still be amongst those who "believed because they had seen,"—believing what we could not help believing—and not among the blessed who "have not *seen* and yet have believed." Our belief would be one compelled by evidence: there would be no place left for the action of *faith*—not faith in a narrative of external

occurrences, but in God and in Christ. A merely intellectual belief in the Resurrection would still leave us far in spirit from Christ, into union with whom faith is meant to bring us. Even though St. Paul believed that he had *seen* Christ, he has still to say, "We walk by faith, not by sight." The appeal must be to something deeper than bodily or intellectual sight, even to that *faith* which is the deeper *insight* of the soul or spirit in man, while it is, at the same time, the highest exercise of the *reason*, as distinguished from mere ratiocination.

The Life Itself is the Revelation

If we see the true life of man as manifested in Jesus Christ to be that of Sonship to God, if we see Jesus Christ to be the Son of God (not to anticipate what we may yet find to be the full truth concerning His Person), how can we believe for a moment that His crucifixion by His enemies extinguished His Personality or ended that Divine-human life that showed itself in Him? To doubt the permanency of the life of Sonship to God is to doubt the permanency of the Divine Life itself. How can we believe it possible that the Personality in whom the Ideal of the creation has been attained can, after all that God has wrought for its realisation, pass into nothingness, or be merely absorbed in the Divine, as

if a separate personal life had never been lived at all? Unless we are to regard the creation as having no ultimate meaning for the Personality that crowns it, and no lasting value for the Creator Himself, we must believe that those at least in whom the true life has been realised (even if only in principle) do not only survive death, but find the fruition and fulness of their life in God. To fail to believe this is really to fail to believe in God.

Besides, if the true life of man is life in union with God, if it be the actual Divine Life in human form, it cannot but be Eternal, and, according to its measure in men, enter into the "glory" which belongs to the Divine Life distinctively. It is even now "Eternal Life." As those Epistles teach, those who are united to Christ are already "made alive with Him" in a life over which death has no power.

If we are God's spiritual children, why should we seek a sign? If we see the life of Christ to be the Divine life in man, why should we, in the presence of His personality, require some further proof through the senses? Do we not then lay ourselves open to the reproach of Christ: "Except ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe"; or to that which their mysterious Companion said to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus: "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have

spoken: Behoved it not the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?" We might have what we should deem a "sign" and yet be mistaken. It is *faith* that is wanted. And if we will not believe without some external evidence, shall we not feel ashamed when we find how real it all is, and see how we *ought* to have trusted and believed? The refusal to believe unless we *see* may place us on a lower level in relation to God, and prove our unfitness for higher trusts. It is not the child-like, but rather the childish spirit that seeks for "signs," and if we rest on these, then, whenever doubt is cast upon them, our confidence is shaken. It is this necessity for *faith* that draws our hearts out to God and keeps us in such communion with God in Christ as brings to us that experience which those early Christians found, and which we have said was a farther ground of their confidence.

In this way, whatever we may believe concerning the Resurrection, and whatever evidences may have been granted to the disciples in adaptation to their mental states, for those who believe in God, and see the true life of man to be, as shown in Christ, that of Sonship to God, the revelation of man's destiny is *included in that of the true life as manifested in Christ.* Even apart from all re-appearances to His disciples, after His death, the Personality of Christ was such, and His disciples' confidence in

Him up to the crucifixion had been so strong, that what they had seen in Him, and found Him to be to them, may have been sufficient, after their recovery from the shock of the crucifixion, to create in them such a conviction of the glorification of their Master as was (as we shall see immediately) verified in their experience by communion with Him, though unseen by them.

Belief in the Resurrection, and even the narratives which record the event, have been most powerful influences in the spread and progress of Christianity. Apart therefrom, most probably it could never have extended itself to people in all mental conditions and of low spirituality as it has done, so that we can see a providential ordering in the matter. Very few of us would desire to part with these narratives, even though we cannot lay the same stress on them as formerly. It would be an unwarranted negation to say that there was nothing objective in the experiences of the disciples. Even though the conviction of the continued life and exaltation of their Lord had a spiritual source, it is psychologically possible that it might become manifest in the form of a vision. But we seem now to be called to a more spiritual faith, one more in keeping with the belief we profess to have in the Personality of Christ, one that ought to throw us more on personal communion with Him and on the present evidences of His Presence and Power. If

criticism be driving us to this, we may see here also a Divine providential ordering.

In view of the uncertainty which for many overhangs the Resurrection narratives, and of the opposing critical opinions concerning them, it may be helpful if we quote part of Dr. Martineau's concluding remarks on the subject in his *Seat of Authority in Religion*, which shows a high estimate of the Personality of Jesus. "From this view of the early Christian traditions we issue with one indisputable historical fact,—the intense belief of the personal disciples of Jesus, and of their quondam persecutor, Paul, that in spite of the cross and the sepulchre he had passed into a heavenly life whence he would visit or whither he would lift those who were his by the pure power of faith and love. That belief was the essence of their message, the inspiration of their labours, the creative energy out of which Christendom was born. If we find that it did not come to them by physical experience,—is it stripped of its validity and dropped out of the religion? If we find that of no one else, under like external conditions, would they have had this belief, that it was contingent on their state of mind towards him alone, that it was due to a personality of unique power to enshrine itself in reverence and love and render death itself conceivable only as a new birth, do we on this account turn it into an illusion? On the contrary, no physical fact, simply

as perceived, touches the essence of religion; but lies within the knowledge of the seen; while all faith in the unseen, inseparable from trust in the Divine Perfection, is born out of the inner experiences of the soul in looking up to one who at once lifts and humbles it, out of the infinite moral ideality of the human affections" (pp. 375, 376).

Union with the Living Christ

But the faith of these Christians in a risen and glorified Lord, their Head and Representative, did not rest merely on what they may have been told of His resurrection. Their faith was, as we have said, verified in their experience. The faith of the first disciples had already over-passed the boundaries of the seen. If the unique Personality of Jesus had that power which Dr. Martineau attributes to it, He had already lifted them into a fellowship with Himself in the unseen and eternal. It was not a new thing they had to rise to. And this faith was an essential element in Christianity. It was *this* risen and exalted Christ that was preached to men; it was in Him they were asked to believe, to Him they were to look; and if there had been no reality in it, how long would Christianity have continued to exist?

We find, therefore, those Christian believers living as those who were in vital union and communion with

a living and glorified Christ. He was their *Lord*—not a dead, but a living Lord—whom they were called to obey and follow, "in whose name" they should do everything, "giving thanks unto God, the Father, through Him," "doing all things heartily as unto the Lord," knowing that "from the Lord they should receive the reward of the inheritance, for they served the Lord Christ." The Lord Jesus was a very real Presence with them. He was the *Head* of whom they held, and from whom the whole body received its requisite nourishment (Eph. iv. 15, 16; Col. ii. 19). Christ was their very *life*: in Him was the fulness, and they were made full in him: it was for them to have "Christ dwelling in the heart through faith": it was *Christ in them* was "the hope of glory."

The reality of the continued life of Jesus was thus something that was verified in their daily experience. They not only believed the witnesses of His resurrection who testified that they had seen Him alive after His crucifixion: they lived in constant communion with Him as their risen Lord. Although invisible to bodily sight, He was present to faith. As another Christian writer put it: "Whom, not having seen, ye love; on whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice greatly with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith (even) the salvation of (your) souls." True, they may have looked for that salvation to

come to them in its fulness at the re-appearing of Christ on earth. But in a deeper sense they were constantly "receiving" it, as their thought and love, fixed on Christ, lifted them more and more above themselves and conformed them to the Divine Ideal manifested in Him. There was a spiritual power proceeding from Christ in God which "wrought nightly" in them, becoming, in short, their very *life*, possessing them with a vitality higher than that of nature, and working in them the sense of a union with Christ such as bodily death could not sever. In this union with their Lord they felt themselves raised into the sphere of the Divine and Eternal, and in their glorified Lord they beheld the image of that which they should thereafter be.

The conviction of the living presence of Christ in God, and of a life and glory beyond the earthly, did not depend merely on belief in the Resurrection, but was bound up with and inseparable from the whole of early Christianity. Without it there could have been no enduring Christianity. The Christian consciousness of salvation was not that of a *completed* salvation, but that of one begun in principle, and to be completed for them and in them by Christ. Jesus was the Saviour, not merely on account of what He had done for them, but also in virtue of that which He was yet to do. It was to a *living* Lord and Saviour they looked, and they found that they did

not look to Him in vain. And wherever the same faith has existed, the same experience has been found. Christ's presence is not remote to the believing soul.

We conclude, therefore, that although these first Christians believed in, it may be, the bodily resurrection of Christ, which we have seen had an important bearing on the *form* in which they entertained "the hope of glory," these Epistles show sufficient grounds for our confidence in the revelation in Christ of man's destiny beyond death, apart from any particular belief concerning His resurrection. That Christ now lives in God is the essential truth for us. Further reasons for this confidence will appear when we have considered the Christian conception of the Person of Christ. To the nature of the Christian "Hope of glory," and to the question of the ultimate destiny of mankind, we shall have to return, in which connection the difficulty which some entertain as to any survival by man of bodily dissolution will be considered.

CHAPTER V

THE PERSON OF CHRIST: THE COSMIC CHRIST

THE perception of the revelation of the true life of man in Christ does not depend on any theory of His Person, but is open to all men to behold. Yet the fact that we do have in Him the realisation of the Divine Ideal of man leads to such a conception of His Person as has most important bearings on His present relations to us, and on the realisation of the true life on our part. It was largely in this connection that the early Christian interest in the Person of Christ had its origin, and it is in this connection that the exalted conception of His Person in these Epistles stands and is dwelt on in them. It is as enforcing what Christ is to us for the spiritual life, not for the mere assertion of a metaphysical idea concerning Him, any more than for the Idealisation of the Saviour. It has all a sober, practical bearing. Further, if it be asked, why should the Ideal of our life come to be so completely manifested in *Christ*? the question can only be answered by the Christian

doctrine of His Person. Realising this, we shall also find in that answer strong confirmation of what has already been said.

The Conception of Christ in these Epistles

In the opening chapter of the Epistle to the Colossians the highest position is ascribed to Jesus Christ, not only in relation to the Church, but to the universe and to God. In view of the false teaching that had been introduced among the Colossians, advocating the worshipping of angels, the conciliation of unseen powers supposed to have influence for good or for evil, legal scrupulosities, and an asceticism believed to recommend men to God or to those unseen powers, it was necessary for Paul to show them that *in Christ* they had all they needed for the spiritual life. And he did this, as the occasion required, by setting forth Christ's relation to God and the universe in such a way as might convince them that they could not possibly have anything more than that which they had in Christ. In relation to God, He is "the Son of His love," "the image of the invisible God." He is "the first-born of all creation"; "*in* Him were all things created in the heavens and upon the earth—all things (the universe) have been created *through* Him and *unto* Him; He is before all things, and *in* Him all things con-

sist"—hold together. "It was the good pleasure of the Father (or of God) that in Him should all the fulness (the entire Plērōma) dwell"; and in chapter ii. 9, 10 it is said that "in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily-wise"—who (as had been stated in chap. i.) "is the Head of all principality and power."

These assertions undoubtedly lead up to what we usually speak of as "the Deity of Christ." Yet it is to be observed—

(1) That it is not supreme or absolute Deity that is affirmed of Christ. In Colossians and Ephesians He is clearly distinguished from "*God*," God the Father, "the God and Father of Christ," "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory" (Eph. i. 17). The apostolic formula is "God our Father *and* the Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. i. 1). It is God who does everything in and through Christ. It was *God* who "raised Him from the dead and set Him at His right hand,—far above all rule and authority and power" (Eph. i. 19, 20). In relation to God, He is "the image" and "the Son *of* God." In relation to the creation, while all things were created *in*, *through* and *unto* Christ, "who is before all things," still it was "*God*, who created all things" and formed "His eternal purpose in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. iii. 9, 11). Thanks are to be given to "God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Col. i. 3, 12, iii. 17).

Christ is "seated at the right hand of God"; "our life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. iii. 1, 3), etc., etc. This is the general representation in the Apostolic writings. In 1 Cor. viii. 6, Paul says, "There is one *God* the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto Him; and one *Lord*, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and we through Him"; and in another "Epistle of the Imprisonment"—Philippians—of about the same date as Colossians and Ephesians, he speaks of Him "who existing in the form of God," yet "emptied Himself," etc., and was in consequence exalted *by God* and "given the name which is above every name—that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is *Lord*, to the glory of God the Father." We must give full recognition to these representations. They are open to all and carry much weight with some. But—

(2) What is thus said of Christ does not admit of an Arian any more than a Humanitarian interpretation. The "first-born (πρωτότοκος) of all creation" cannot, in the connection in which it stands, mean that He Himself belongs to the creation. For He is said to have been "*before* all things," and all things were created *in* Him (as their Ideal), *through* Him (as instrumental cause), and *unto* Him (as final cause), hence also *in* Him the universe "holds together" (consists)—is a definite consistent whole—a Cosmos. He cannot therefore be regarded as a

creature, however high, but must participate in the Deity. He is "the Son" in distinction from all created beings. It is manifestly the same doctrine practically as we have in the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel, in the opening verses of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and in other writings of St. Paul and St. John. In the Apocalypse, also, Christ is "the Alpha and the Omega"—"the beginning of the Creation of God," "the first and the last, the beginning and the end."

Christianity is bound to affirm that in Jesus Christ we have not only *man*, but *God* in one undivided Person, that in the life and death of Christ we behold a Divine Being expressing Himself in human form. It is bound to affirm this, not as a belief to be accepted for some dogmatic reason, but because it is vital to Christianity as a living religion. It is only thus that we can think of Christ as holding that present relation to us in which the supreme value of the Christian Faith is centred, which we find to be true in experience. It is only in Christ that we can find God manifested as God, although in human form. Neither in nature nor within ourselves can we so find Him. It was the experience of what they had in Christ—such at-one-ment with God and such new Spiritual life—and what they saw revealed in His life, that led the ultimately surviving and dominant section of Christians to

affirm His Deity. They did this, of necessity, in the forms open to them at the time, chiefly in those belonging to the Logos doctrine, so that for most Jesus Christ was the pre-existent Divine Logos (meaning originally the Reason or Thought, and Word of God and the centre of all Divine powers) conceived as personal, as we have it most fully set forth in the Fourth Gospel. To St. Paul, however, as to the Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, Christ is the Divine "*Son.*" But this designation (Hebrew in its origin), and the other terms which are applied to Christ in Colossians, belong also to the Logos doctrine. Our concern is not with the *forms* in which the early Christians expressed their faith, but with the *substance* of that faith. The Logos doctrine, although containing important truth, is strange to us, and, carried back to its original meaning, it scarcely gives what Christian theology seeks to affirm.

The doctrine of "the Deity of Christ" requires more careful and discriminating statement than it has often received. We must beware, when affirming what is truth for ourselves, lest we create unnecessary barriers in the way of the acceptance of the truth by others. We must remember the multitudes of educated people everywhere who are standing aloof from Christianity, many of whom are honestly unable to accept this doctrine as it

has been commonly stated, or, at least, as they understand the statement. Not only the Jew and the Unitarian, but, as has been recently said—only too truly—there are "thousands of educated men in every country of Western Europe who no longer believe, in any old orthodox sense, in the full Divinity of Christ" (C. G. Montefiori in *Hibbert Journal*, January 7th, 1913). This fact should give us pause, and lead us to reconsider seriously our theological definitions and modes of statement.

We ought surely to be as anxious to see all these increasing numbers brought to accept the faith as we are for the conversion of the heathen, —more anxious should we not say? for (as we have said elsewhere), if all these at home were really brought to Christ, the outlying heathen world would be speedily converted. Especially should we have regard for those whose minds have been formed under the influence of Modern Science, who read history and observe the actual happenings in the realm of Nature, to many of whom, therefore, "the (physical) miraculous" (however true for ourselves) is a serious difficulty. The difficulties that many feel are not being diminished, but rather increased, by the better knowledge which criticism is supposed to give us of the historical Christ, as He was conceived or understood and reported by the Synoptists, who viewed Him, as they could see and understand

Him, through what was largely a Jewish atmosphere. The very phrase "the Deity of *Christ*," although it cannot well be avoided, is apt to be confusing. For Christ, in one aspect of His Person —that which first presents itself—was certainly *man*. To say simply, without explanation, "Christ was God," tends to be misleading. But if we add the qualifying words, "in human form," we state a great Christian truth which can be vindicated to reason, and which is all that we really mean to affirm, namely, that *God* was truly present, incarnate in that man, expressing His Divine Life through Him. It was a Divine as truly as it was a human life. While it is true that "we must distinguish the Divine Principle even from the Person in whom it may first have become manifest," yet if that Person was wholly possessed thereby, so that the Divine was actually formative of His Personality, He was as truly Divine as human; we have in Him God in that human form. So again, in answer to the question, How does God come to be there? How did God become man? we must show the Incarnation to be involved in the *Creation*, and as coming in the continuity of the Divine working in Nature and in man. Otherwise we leave an unbridged hiatus between science and religion.

It is thus also that we shall be able to get light concerning the *pre-existence*. There seems to be a

tendency at present to lay less stress on this. But apart from pre-existence in some real form in God expressing itself in Christ, we cannot have a truly Divine Lord and Saviour and Revealer of God. The *Divine* cannot begin to be: it must be Eternal. We must see *God* manifesting Himself in the humanity of Christ, and that humanity as having its source and origin in God.

Let us now, without further preface, turn to the doctrine of Christ as stated in the Epistle to the Colossians, and see if we cannot find therein that which will approve itself to our reason as well as to our faith.

Christ The Ideal and Goal of the Creation

The special feature here is that Christ is represented as the Ideal and Goal of the *Creation.* Not only does Redemption centre in Him, but the World, the Universe. He is not only "the Head of the Church," but of Humanity; not only "the first-born from the dead," but "of all Creation." Redemption through Christ is not an after-thought of God, but the outcome of an "eternal purpose" in which the world itself was founded. If we believe in God at all, we must believe in a Divine purpose *in* the Creation and in a Divine Ideal *for* it. That Ideal was He "*in* whom all things were created," and it is

as the realisation of that Ideal that Christ appears. There are not two separate Divine movements, one represented by Creation and the other by Redemption; there is but *one* Divine movement, natural and spiritual, issuing in both. The Christ who appears as Redeemer existed eternally in the thought and purpose of God. He does not enter the world for the first time in what we know as "the Incarnation"; His appearance is the outcome of a Divine creative process in its fulness, not to be separated from it: the Incarnation is the fulness in manifestation of the Divine creative act, and at the same time of the Creator.

Bishop Lightfoot, in his Commentary on Colossians, emphasised the importance of seeing "the mediatorial function of Christ in the Church as flowing from His mediatorial functions in the world, an idea which," he said truly, "has with ourselves retired very much into the background. Though in the creed common to all the Churches we profess our belief in Him as the Being 'through whom all things were created,' yet in reality this confession seems to exercise very little influence on our thoughts." The loss, he pointed out, is serious, "both as affects the breadth and fulness of our theological conceptions and our sympathy with the revelations of science. Through the recognition of this idea, with the consequences that flow from it as

a living influence, more than in any other way, may we hope to strike the chords of that 'vaster music' which results only from the harmony of knowledge and faith, of reverence and research." These words are as true for to-day as they were for the time when they were written. It is only, we think, on the lines of the presentation of Christ in the opening chapter of the Epistle to the Colossians that we are able to gain such a conception of His Person as shall satisfy reason as well as faith and make our theology at one with science. We have indeed a similar representation in the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel; but the *ground* of the assertion is not so manifest as it is here. Let us ask, *What is the foundation on which it rests?*

Like "the revelation of the mystery" to which it belongs, it rests on *what was actually seen in the life of Christ*,—on the fact that the true Divinely-conceived *life of man* was realised and manifested in Him. In this we have the highest expression of *God* that can be given us in this world; it is all that *we* can know of God. It is for this reason—the manifestation of the true life of man in Christ—that the Apostle can go back to the Eternal and speak of Christ as "the image (likeness and revelation) of God," "the first-born of all the creation," *in* whom, *through* whom, and *unto* whom all things were created, and in whom they hold together, and as

such the Head of all powers and persons, whether in the heavens or on the earth. Let us take first, Christ in His relation to man and this world of humanity, leaving aside for the moment the wider relations affirmed of Him.

Christ in Relation to this World

If man's life in its truth was manifested in Christ, then it was certainly *in Him*, as the Divine Ideal, that man was conceived and created. We see the Ideal of anything when we witness its realisation. And, since man is the crown, and, as far as we can see, the final end of the creation, the world, and all things in it had their origin in Him. We see in Him the realised, and materially expressed, Ideal of the *Creation*. In this view Jesus Christ, even as the man in whom the Divine Ideal of man's life should be realised, had at least an ideal pre-existence in God, and was in this sense clearly "before all things," and He in, through, and for whom all things were created.

But the Ideal was also something *in God*. If Christ was "the first-born of all the creation," yet not belonging *to* the creation, or a creature, His birth before the creation must be regarded as a Divine Conception. It was a Divine Thought; it had existence in the Divine Mind; it was something

efficiently present to God. It was ideal, but not what we commonly mean when we say that a thing is "ideal merely." It was a very potent Reality in God, so much so that the whole creation proceeded from it. It was God as He conceived the Creation and became the Creator. Not thought merely, but *Life* also—the life-potency of the world, the source of its existence, the power of its evolution or development. The thought which was the beginning of the Creation was the most Real of all things —that which gave Reality to all else—living, Divine. As the Ideal and Potency of the Creation it was something of *God*, passing out of God to be the life of the world.

The conception which modern science gives us of the world is that of a great *organism*, which, like any of the smaller organisms it contains, gradually realises and expresses its ideal. We see the beginning revealed in the end. That ideal of the entire creation which was Christ in the Divine Thought must find ultimate realisation in the Creation of which it was the ideal, along the lines of the Divine working therein. All throughout the world's history, throughout all human history, it had been moving onward towards its full expression. It found partial expression in the "matter" which became its instrument, higher expression as life appeared and rose in character, higher still in the first human form, rising

continually as man developed under various influences, including the spiritual (as we shall see farther on), and in Jesus Christ it found complete expression. It was God immanent becoming gradually emanent, becoming so fully at length in Christ. The Divine creative Thought and Power that formed the world found expression in Him in human form. Therefore the Apostle can say truly, "It pleased the Father (or God) that in Him should all the fulness dwell."

The Ideal in God as it was manifested in its realisation in Christ, was that of *Sonship* to Himself—it was therefore the realisation and expression in human form of that which was eternal in God. If we may take the meaning of the description of Christ in Col. i. 14—"the Son of His love"—as being that which Augustine, Olshausen, and Lightfoot, amongst others, adopted, viz., as referring to His generation of the essence of God, which is Love, we have here "the Son" *in* God and *of* God as the Ideal of the world, who can therefore be described as "the image of the invisible God"; and we see why "sonship" was the distinctive character of the consciousness of Christ. We see also that that which was working itself out into full expression in the creation was the *Love* which God is, in which man who should crown the world is conceived as His son, which sonship finds its full human expression in Christ. Viewed thus—simply

as expressing the true life of man—we see in Christ the eternal Divine in its full Divine-human expression.

It is only in human form—as man—that God can be manifested in this world in which man is the highest production. And along the whole line of human history we never see *God* till we come to Jesus Christ. Only in Him does the heart find that which it seeks, or the reason that which satisfies it. Only then do we witness the ideal that shines within ourselves realised. Only then is the theistic affirmation completely warranted. Up till then, power was manifested, but its highest character as ethical life only reached its adequate expression in Christ. There can be no higher manifestation of that ethical life which is the Divine Life than the Perfect Love which lived in Christ. Before He appeared, its character as ethical life had indeed been shown. We see men all over the world rising in some measure into it and gradually advancing therein. We witness in Israel, in particular, a more or less constant onward and upward movement (as will be more fully referred to after), till it culminates in Jesus Christ. Scientists are discussing to-day how life originated, but through whatever medium it appeared, it was a manifestation of what is contained in the creative potency. As it rose in character, its nature was revealed in increasing fulness, till at length in Christ,

life in its highest, even Divine form was seen—"that eternal Life which was with the Father and was manifested unto us." Before the appearance of Christ men believed in God—more or less imperfectly conceived—but there was no God fully *manifested.* But in that life of Christ we "see God"; we feel that the words which the Fourth Gospel ascribes to Him are warranted: "He that hath seen *Me* hath seen the Father"; and we join in the Christian rejoicing: "the darkness is past and the true light shineth."

Jesus Christ, therefore, while truly *man*, born, living, learning, and dying as man, looking up to God as His Father and doing His will, as He also taught His disciples to do, was at the same time, *as that man*, God in human form. In Him God had become "manifest in the flesh." He is present in that true *man* as He has entered the world. The Divine principle and potency of the creation which had a real personal existence in God, attained in Him full expression in the world. We are all doubtless the product of that same Divine principle, but in Christ complete ethical and personal expression was reached. But it was in human form, under the conditions and limitations of humanity. It was a gradual growth or development. There was no non-human consciousness of pre-existence, any more than the possession of omnipotence, omnipresence, or omniscience, which are attributes of God in Himself, but

not of man, nor of God as incarnate in man. But there was in Christ a unique consciousness of *Sonship* towards the Father: this was His distinctive Divine-human consciousness, as we should expect it to be.

For the Ideal, let us repeat, was that of *Sonship*—a Sonship which was real in God, but ideal as destined to find expression in man. It existed *in* God and *for* God; it was in God the motive and power of the creation. In His infinite Love, in this ideal, God went out from Himself (if we may so speak) to be the principle of the creation, in order that this life of Sonship to Himself should be realised by the beings who should crown His working. In other words, God in that "Mode" or "Person" (again to use imperfect human terms) of "Son," became Creator in order that this Sonship should be shared by beings capable of rising into it. It was the only divinely worthy conception of the creation. For God cannot seek what is ultimately lower than the diffusion of His own life of love. And it is the only satisfying thought of the purpose of the creation, with its struggle and suffering. In Christ the Ideal was realised, and therein God as Son—God in that Sonship which is eternally real in Himself—was incarnated. The ethical Sonship manifested in Christ is identical in character with the Sonship eternally in God. As Dr. Garvie remarks: "It is to a false metaphysic that we owe the assumption that

ethical Sonship, Sonship revealed and realised in the entire personal development, is something else and less than an ontological Sonship might be. If Spirit be the ultimate reality, then there can be nothing more real than the Sonship of Jesus as expressed in His self-consciousness. In this personal union of God with man there is essential union" (*The Christian Certainty and the Modern Mind*, p. 166).

As we have seen in these Epistles, it is not God in His absolute, unconditioned Deity that becomes incarnate in Christ, not "the Father" but "the Son"; and it is "the Son" *as man*. But still it is *God* in the essential ethical and ontological truth of His Being, God as He has entered the world and communicated Himself to man, God actually present in Christ as He had moved towards His Self-expression in human form, God, as in the evolution of the world and of man, "natural" and "spiritual," He is enabled to come to us, as He continuously imparted Himself to Christ, and as through Christ He seeks to communicate Himself to us all.

At the same time, in the *humanity* of Christ realising the Divine Ideal, we behold the true *man* and Representative of men. If contemplated from above, we see the Deity becoming incarnated in Him; regarded from below, we see man in Him rising to the truth of his manhood. If, on the one

hand, all the Divine working and self-impartation culminates in Him; on the other hand, all the advances of man Godwards also culminated in Him: He *is* man in his truth. And for this reason, just as His Divine-human consciousness in relation to God was that of Sonship, so, in relation to man, it was that feeling of identity and representativeness which found expression in that name by which He always called Himself the Son of Man.[1]

Christ in Relation to the Universe

It may seem more difficult to vindicate, on the ground laid down, the *universal* relationship which the Apostle ascribes to Christ. Yet we may gain some light here also; we may see reason to believe that the wider relation is necessarily involved in the establishment of the narrower. For the Creation is *one*, the Universe is one—not to be divided into parts.

Of course, to the Apostle the universe was much less than it is to us, and anthropocentric. For us it seems to be infinite. An endless vista of worlds in all stages of their history is opened up to our view: creation is continually and universally proceeding. Yet we can imagine no worthier Ideal or motive for the great process in the wondrous whole than that

[1] This term is discussed in the writer's *The Cross and the Kingdom* (2nd ed., T. & T. Clark).

which we have seen manifested in Christ as the Ideal of man. Perhaps on other grounds we cannot say positively that *man* is the highest created being in the universe. But, so far as we know, there is no higher life than the ethical human, and there may be no higher kind of ethical life possible in created beings. The spectroscope has shown that the entire material universe is composed of the same elements as the earth and solar system, and it is by no means improbable that *life* also, wherever it may appear, is of the same essential type. We cannot conceive, indeed, of any other type of ethical life than that which is the ideal of human life as we see it realised in Christ. For it is the very life of God in man, Sonship to Himself. In whatever varied *forms* of being that life may find expression, it must be in itself the essential life of all personal beings. As has been well said by a recent writer, in view of the question of Immortality: "There is little reason to suppose that the course of evolution in other systems has been materially different from that in our own solar system. Thus man, at the culmination of his evolution (which is not yet), might easily represent the highest development of any creature in the universe as visibly constituted" (H. B. Marriott Watson in *N. American Rev.*, August 1912). In the above quotation it is said that the culmination of human evolution is not yet reached. This is true, of course,

of the race as a whole. But if the Christian belief is well founded, that the highest point has been attained in a human Personality who represents the race, then the relation of that Person, not only to the human race, but to all who share in the same kind of life, stands fast. And if we ask *what* the highest point in human life is supposed to be even by those who have not the Christian faith immediately in view, we shall find the answer, that it is *Perfect Love.* Towards this the whole evolution of Humanity has been, and still is, moving on. To quote again the writer referred to: "In reviewing the history of the human race there emerges clearly above all else the continuity, irregular continuity it must be admitted, but still the continuity, of a progressive movement from barbarous passions and tastes and acts toward a greater refinement of feelings and manners and a clarified loving-kindness. So far as history in the past is any guide in inferences, we are entitled to assume the progress at an increasing rate of humanity toward an ideal of universal and perfected benevolence." As this writer says, "this seems to be the reading of history", and if his words are here given an application which he may not have had in mind, they are none the less true, and they bear out what is affirmed in this Epistle of the universal reach of that Divine Ideal of Life which was eternally conceived by God and realised and

manifested in Christ. As Dr. Du Bose remarks: "Christianity has been the first to recognise the spiritual as well as the rational ground of the universe. According to it, the Divine *Logos*, by which is meant the eternal reason, meaning, and ground of all creation, is one. If Jesus Christ is the *Logos* of man, then He is the Logos of all creation—of what we should now call all evolution—of which man is the final cause and crown. And if He is the Logos of these, then He is the Logos of God Himself; that is to say, the full account of man is the account of the universe, so far as it has significance for us, and the truth of the universe and of man as its end and crown expresses all the account God can give us of Himself. Outside of that is outside of our limit of experience" (*The Reason of Life*, p. 253).

Therefore we conclude that in Jesus Christ *as manifesting the true life of man*—in whom we see the Divine Thought of man realised—we have Him "*in* whom all things were created," the "Son of God's Love" appearing in human form, the all-creating "Word" become flesh, He "who existed in the form of God"—that is, as an element in the Divine personal life—appearing as the Son of man and becoming the servant of men, stooping even to the death of the Cross, "the Eternal Life which was

with the Father and was manifested unto us." The personal life of Christ was the expression in time of that which is eternal in God. And, of course, for such a life bodily dissolution must mean, not cessation of being, but liberation. The Divine-human Person did not *die*. He lives and operates for ever in that Divine Life and Glory in which He had His origin. The Creative Thought and Potency which went forth from God in creation has in Christ returned to God in the realisation of the Divine Ideal; while, of course, it continues also to work on in the world in the forms in which it has conditioned itself in and for the creation.

Man is also thus revealed in Christ as being (however unlike it he may often appear) in his ideal and origin and destiny Divine—*of* God and *for* sonship to God, with a life that can only be realised *in* God, and which shall be, in its measure, a manifestation of the life of God, in the likeness of Him who is "the first-born of all the creation" and "the first-born of many brethren."

But since we are viewing Christ as the Ideal of the *Creation*, and regarding the incarnation of God in Him as the necessary outcome of this, we must devote a chapter to the endeavour to show, more in detail, *how* the Divine comes to appear as the human, in harmony with what science teaches concerning the process of evolution in humanity.

CHAPTER VI

HOW THE IDEAL WAS REALISED—CHRIST AND OURSELVES—ADVANTAGES OF THE VIEW SUGGESTED—NOTE ON THEORIES OF HEREDITY

AT present there are many who are unable to understand *how* we get the Divine Christ. For in Christ we must see, not merely a man raised to the Godhead, but a Divine Being expressing His life in human form. By Incarnation, it is said. But what does this mean? How is it effected? In what way does a Divine Ethical Being enter the world and be therein a true man? It is not the old question, How can the Infinite find expression in the finite? for it is now generally recognised that the infinitude of God is not quantitative, but qualitative, and that the greater the Personality, the greater is His power to go out from Himself. Many believing Christians have only the vaguest ideas on the subject. It may be said that we do not need to know. Certainly we do not in order to salvation, or for practical devotion to Christ. But for an intelligent

conception of Christianity, for its acceptance by the mind of to-day, and for its permanence in the world, it is necessary to have some reasonable view of the mode of the Incarnation, even though something may remain unexplained. We need at least to see the truth to be in such harmony with the rest of our knowledge that it shall be to us a vital belief, one that we can hold with confidence, and not something which we merely accept.

The early Christian writers, such as Paul and John, do not seem to have formed any theory as to *how* the Divine Son of God came to appear on the earth in human form. Paul speaks of God "sending forth His Son," and says of Christ that He "emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant." John says of the Logos "who was *in* the world," that He "became flesh," and elsewhere makes Jesus speak of Himself as "coming down from Heaven," which is manifestly a figurative expression. Although the narratives of the "Miraculous Conception" or "Virgin Birth" are early attempts to account for the Personality of Jesus, they do not give us the incarnation of a pre-existent Person, but the conception and birth, through "the Holy Spirit," of an entirely new Being, without human paternity, to be called, *for that reason*, "the Son of God."

But if we are to see science and religion *one*, as Dr. Lightfoot thought we might do were we to adopt

more seriously the thought of Christ as the Ideal of the *Creation*; if we are to see the continuity of Creation and Redemption, and both as issuing from the eternal purpose of God, we must be able to comprehend all that was realised in the appearing of Christ as having been brought about through the operation of those laws of life and development by means of which the Creation has been carried onwards by its Creator, immanent and transcendent, towards its goal.

The realisation of the Creative Ideal means that God as He thought the world crowned by man as His Son, and as His creative power went out into the Creation and was effective therein, reached the culmination of His working in Nature and in man in that organism which formed the basis of the human life of Jesus; and in the conscious Person arising thereon, found such continuous and complete receptivity to Himself as enabled Him fully to express the Divine life in the form of human Sonship.

The first requisite for the realisation of the Divine Ideal in man was the production of such an *organism* as should be the adequate ground for the expression of the creative God. We rightly speak of "the gradual Incarnation in Christ," of the "progressive self-communication of God, or the Logos, to Him"; but the first requirement is such a human organism

as shall be *capable* of being the organ of the Divine. This is what the theology that does not see the Incarnation to be continuous with the Creation fails to find, except through some such external Divine act as to the modern mind in general remains at least dubious. The continuity of the pre-existent Divine with the Divine in Christ is apt also to be lost sight of, and Christ is in danger of becoming only a God-filled man in the same way as others may be, only in a higher degree. The real uniqueness of His Person and of the presence of God in Him (while He remains truly human) is thus lost, and pre-existence tends to become more or less a matter of indifference. Christ, thus regarded, is "Divine" as others may be; but we cannot say that *He* is "God manifest in the flesh."

In every man there are two constituents—the *organic* and the *personal*. Each human life has its basis in an almost invisible germ which develops into the human child. And each human child possesses both the general human instincts and capacities, and special tendencies and capacities, which distinguish it individually. Both are matters of *inheritance*, the product of the original germ-plasm with the various influences which have operated on it in the lines of ancestry. Hence we see some born with a low or even a degenerate type of organism, and others born geniuses, intellectual and religious. There is no

question here of the inheritance of acquired external bodily modifications.[1] But there could be no such thing as evolution or development apart from the inheritance of such elements as make for progress. We could not find a Plato or a Shakespeare in the Stone-age; he can only appear as the product of long ages of intellectual and moral development. And it is not alone the creation of what is termed "tradition"—or an ever-rising environment—in which each succeeding race makes a better start, that is requisite; there must be development of the *organisms*, so that the persons they represent may be capable of taking advantage of the improved environment. Man is not merely body but *soul* as well—personality. It is the evolution of *souls* we have to think of rather than of bodies; and although body and soul are inseparably connected, it is not the body that forms the soul. Rather is it the soul that forms the body, as appears most manifestly in those portions of the organism—in the brain—which minister to the intellectual, moral, and spiritual life. It is *there*, in what is deepest in man and most formative of him, that we must look for the chief means of *human* development,—whether or not we can explain *how*

[1] Or, indeed, of actual modifications of any kind; rather of *tendencies*, or increased *capacities*. See "Note on Theories of Heredity" at end of chapter, and reference to E. S. Goodrich on *Evolution* therein.

the influences come to affect the germ-plasm. It matters not whether we can tell *how* in any case mind and body interact or act in unison. As Dr. Orr remarks, dealing with this question of heredity: "A single life pervades it (the body), every part is *en rapport* with every other part; probably no vital change takes place in any part which is not attended by changes in other parts which defy physical explanation" (*Sin as a Problem of To-day*, p. 210). Indeed, in all evolution the spiritual is first and deepest and determinative. "Progressive evolution," says W. M'Dougall, "has been primarily an evolution of mental structure, and only secondarily one of bodily structure. Mental evolution leads the way, and evolution of bodily structure is in the main the consequence of it; and this remains true, no matter what theory of the conditions of evolution we adopt" (*Psychology*, pp. 174, 175). See also the present writer's *Christian Theism and a Spiritual Monism.*

Unless we are to revert to the idea of the instantaneous creation of man with full-blown powers, we must believe in the gradual development of his higher powers and capacities, which implies their organisation in his system and some form of hereditary transmission. Even the "Creative Evolution" of Bergson requires *preparation* for the next step in it. This does not imply that the results of merely external acquirements, or those gained by one

individual merely, will always be effectually transmitted. Christian parents, *e.g.*, may have religiously indifferent children; but where there are successive generations responding to similar stimuli, the characters become fixed and are inherited. There was a time when man was not the rational and moral being which in the leading races he has become—a time when he did not possess the organised reason and conscience he now possesses. As the intellectual and moral qualities and faculties have been developed, so has the religious, God-tending faculty, till in Christ we see it (along with other highly developed qualities) appearing as *dominant*. All this is the gradual progressive working of God in man, as truly Divine working as if it were an instantaneous act.

This is just what the Old Testament shows us God was seeking to produce by means of the spiritual education and development of Israel. The Old Testament, we commonly say, had *Christ* for its goal. But too often we think of this only in respect of teaching or knowledge. But it was the creation of *personalities* that God was aiming at, and it was through their creation mainly that the work was carried forward. Personalities have always been the most efficient media of higher influences—special personalities, men of the prophetic mould or stamp. But, like poets, prophets are *born*, not made. There must be an organic, inborn quality which fits them

to be the bearers of the "Word of God." And it was not prophets merely God was seeking, but *saints* also—men in whom His Word should dominate the life, in whom it should at length become the deepest principle of the life; He was aiming at the production of an organism in which "the Word" itself could "become flesh," that is, *man*; and the Divine Ideal of man be realised. In the heart of Israel there came to be created a craving for and expectation of the coming of one who should be the ideal King and "Son of God"; on whom the Spirit of the Lord should rest: the desire, the earnest longing for his appearance became one of the strongest influences in the national life.

In Jesus Christ "of the seed of David" there came to birth that which God had been all along working out, not only in nature, but in man by His Spirit, viz., the complete ascendancy of "the Spirit" over "the flesh," or that animal nature in which man must first stand—the Divine, God Himself, as the principle of the life. To state the process in terms of science: Each organism is the product of the combined working of two factors: (1) the ideal type, and life-potency somehow contained in its ideo-plasm; and (2) the environment in which it stands. The one is as essential as the other. Apart from a suitable environment—which is transcendent to the organism —there could be no growth or development. A seed

will not grow without moisture, etc. Now, the "natural" environment in which life was placed was adequate to the production of man as the highest form of animal life. But if the Ideal of man is something higher, if it be "spiritual" as distinguished from "natural" merely, if he is to become a son of God and be the expression of the Divine Life itself, then a new *spiritual* environment must operate on him. We rise here from nature to history and to specifically *religious* history. It is historical fact that at a certain stage of his development man awoke to the reality of a Divine, spiritual environment—a Reality above himself—with which he sought by various means to come into contact. As he was enabled to do this more and more truly; as he was led to know God in His truth and to seek the higher life that called him, new spiritual influences operated on him, a *spiritual* life became superimposed on the "natural" and was gradually developed in his experience. As with every organism, the transcendent united itself with what was already immanent, becoming a new Divine immanence in man.

In Israel we witness the main line of this Divine spiritual operation and answering development till it culminates in Christ. This was the meaning of that long continued, sometimes strange and painful discipline of Israel—the "chosen people" truly, but chosen with a world-wide end in view. And just

as the long *intellectual* development of a people comes to expression in some man of genius who towers above his fellows, and, it may be, remains above them, so the *spiritual* development of Israel reached its fruition in the birth of Christ. Or, just as a certain line of lower life culminated in *man*, so a certain human line culminated in *Christ*—man wholly after the Spirit—man as the Son of God, the Divine man, the God-man. As in the movement of life *manwards*, countless animal forms were left behind, and the goal reached along one line only; so in the further movement *Godwards*, it was along one special line that the realisation of the Ideal was attained. Much in the surrounding world gave no indication of special Divine working; but *there*, in Israel, it was steadily moving onward, and its goal was reached in Christ. From the first, even in the constitution of His organism, the *Spirit* was supreme in Christ. This is the essential fact in His being described as the Child of the Holy Spirit. Since the Spirit is the Divine in man, God was immanent in this organism as He had increasingly imparted Himself to man, or had been able to enter the world's life.

It was, of course, this organism that was the ground of the *personal* life of Christ. From the innate qualities of the organism the movements that find expression in the personal life take their rise. Out of this arose His unique filial conscious-

ness, and equally unique sense of oneness with humanity, becoming clarified and strengthened in the personal life. This inner spirit, along with His religious environment—the Old Testament Scriptures, the indications of the Will of God that came to Him, the presence of the Father and communion with Him —was followed out freely and fully in the personal life, so that there was an increasing incarnation and manifestation of God in Him, and expression of man in his truth, crowned by the self-sacrifice of the Cross. In this way in the life of Christ the Divine Sonship found complete human expression, and we have in the one indivisible Person both God and man. We see in His whole life and work, and in that death for our sakes which was the highest expression of both the Divine and the human, the manifestation of God in human form—of God *as man.* And all this is, as we have seen, simply the realisation of the Divine Ideal of man.

It is worth pointing out also how Israel was brought into close contact with the leading peoples of the ancient world. To the original Semitic stock there may have been thus added elements from (1) Egyptians, (2) other Semites and Assyrians, (3) Babylonians, (4) Persians, (5) Greeks, (6) Romans. That such was the case would be in keeping with the universal action of God in the world, making towards one end, and it would help us to realise

the truly *representative* character of Christ's humanity, the "recapitulation" of man in Him.

Identity and Difference of Christ and Ourselves

The *identity* of Christ with ourselves consists in the fact that He was truly human, and, as such, receptive of a Divine life. The *difference* between Christ and ourselves is that He was so constituted that the Divine could find its complete expression through Him, and that He, in His personal life as man, so responded and acted that such complete expression was actually given. The ideal realised in Him is the same for us all; but it was in His *organism* that the results of the Divine education and development of man, as it had proceeded along a definite line, found such organic expression as made it possible for Him to become in His personal life that organ of the Divine that He was.

This did not make His personal life less free, or save Him from temptation. He had a personal human will which had to be tested in its loyalty to the Father. He wore the flesh that we wear, and had a self of His own, so that He could be "tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin." It is God *as man* that we behold in Him. To the Divine Ideal of human life that was manifested in Him the Ideal as it shines within ourselves

answers. It is to the life of sonship to God that we are all called, after Christ. But the Divine working had reached its destined goal in His organism, as it has not done in ours. In this the uniqueness of Jesus consists, and this is why there cannot be another *Christ*. It is just this *difference* between Christ and us,—not in respect of the ideal of our life, but of its attainment; it is because in Him the Spirit was from the first, even organically, or as His birth-endowment, supreme over the lower elements of the nature; and because of the remaining strength of the lower nature in us, with the sinful tendencies we have inherited, which too often find their expression in actual sin, or tend to do so, that we stand in need of the redemptive and perfecting influences which come to us from Christ. It is therefore that *He* is "our Life." The Ideal, as spiritual, had first to be realised in an individual who should represent the race in the truth of its life, and through spiritual influences become the source and power of the same life in its fulness to others who stand in need of spiritual reinforcement and fulfilment. It is thus that Christ is presented to us in these Epistles.[1]

[1] For fuller treatment of some of the matters dealt with in this chapter the writer may be permitted to refer to his book, *The Spirit and the Incarnation* (3rd Edition: T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh).

Some of the Advantages of this View

1. The conception of Christ and of the presence and operation of God in Him to which we are thus led avoids the difficulty felt by many in view of the assertion of such Divine *intervention* in the world's history and in the course of Nature as seems out of keeping with our modern idea of the relation of the Divine creative Power to the world in which it is operative. There is nothing gained for a wholesome faith by this idea of intervention. What is supposed to be thus gained for faith may surely be more worthily gained by belief in constant Divine progressive action, culminating in Christ and His Cross. It is more like *God* to think of His increasing presence and action in the world than to think only of intervention at a particular time. How are we to conceive of such intervention in the order of the world—of the coming, as if from without, of the Divine into the human? Must not the entrance of God into our humanity be in the line of the *continuous* Divine working, natural and spiritual? God is *Spirit*, and He can only increasingly enter our humanity by means of *spiritual* impartation, which must take effect in human personality and character. His incarnation in man must be a gradual one, proceeding along the lines which He has laid down for Himself in the constitution of Nature and of man. In the Prologue

to the Fourth Gospel the Divine Logos is said to have been already "*in* the world," which "became through Him."

But, indeed, the idea of intervention, in the sense often affirmed, is precluded by the statements in these Epistles. What was done in Christ belonged to *the eternal purpose* of God, formed *before* the creation of the world. Creation itself was conceived *in* Christ, and it was "in the fulness of the times" in the Divine ordering of the world that He appeared. We see the whole, therefore, eternally conceived by God and realised in the normal continuity of the Divine working in Nature and in man. Not, indeed, as a process of "natural" evolution merely. God is transcendent as well as immanent, although, since He is in Himself *Spirit*, His transcendent action can only take effect where there is spiritual being. We are also led thus to see how real, and how truly directed to a special world-embracing end, was that working of God in Israel which the Old Testament records, and which was completed by the later experiences of that people. Some modern critics place certain of the most advanced passages of the Old Testament much nearer the time of Christ than was formerly done.

2. The difficulty felt by Theology, or that may well be felt by it, How can we conceive of a Divine Being becoming man through a *kenōsis* in time,

especially when we remember that God is an *ethical* Being—a Being with an ethical character? is also obviated. Of course, our inability to conceive it is no sufficient reason against it; but we have little need to create difficulties in the way of belief if they can be avoided. There must be, indeed, a Divine *kenōsis* as the presupposition of the creation itself. God, in order to create, must limit or condition Himself so as to become the immanent Ideal and Potency of the world's life. He must begin at the lowest so as to reach again the highest. This is why there is an *evolution*. Creation involves such sacrifice on the part of the Perfect Love, which seeks thereby to impart itself to others. But this is a very different thing from the idea of a Divine Ethical Being expressing Himself in human form in a moment of time. To those who breathed the atmosphere of the early Christians, with their Scripture records of Divine theophanies behind them, it may not have been difficult for many of them to conceive of a Divine Being coming into the world as a man. Yet the earliest heresies, denying the actual "flesh" of Christ and the rise and power of Doketism, show that the difficulty was felt by not a few even then. To those who do not *think* seriously, or who simply say, "All things are possible with God," with no thought of the *how*—for they are possible only in God's way of working—there may still be no difficulty in the

belief. But to such as know something of the laws of life, and of how each human being originates (in a microscopic speck of matter which contains implicitly all future potentialities), the difficulty is a very real one. Not because they have ruled out "the miraculous" beforehand — for what may happen cannot be foretold with certainty — but simply because of the inherent difficulty arising from the fact that God is an *Ethical* Being. To be really *man* we must be born into the world, and an ethical character can only be gained by obedience to ethical principle. An Ethical Being, already such, cannot clothe himself right away in a human form; God can only appear in humanity as the result of the inworking in man of that ethical character in which alone He can be manifested.

In no other way either can we see Jesus Christ appearing as *man* in the continuity of human life-experience. Only so coming would He be truly *man*. It is quite true that we must think of the redemption of our humanity as being effected by the presence of a higher ethical and spiritual life within it—even a Divine Life. We are thereby raised to a higher grade of life: it is "a new creation." But we must see this higher life entering the world, not by intervention from without, but in the normal way of the Divine working in humanity, and coming into manifestation in the normal course of human

development under the various Divine influences which have been operating on man. Theologians hold that sinfulness and *bad* qualities are transmitted from generation to generation in, it may be, increasing power. Why not believe that *good* is also transmissible in like manner. Surely the human system is not a vehicle for the transmission of evil only! And what else was the meaning of all God's working in man? While the new man must transcend us all and be the Fountain of new life for all—a "second Adam," a new Head to our humanity—He must at the same time be really human; for otherwise the life revealed in Him would have no relation to us. We must, in other words, see the redemption in Christ as flowing out of the Divine *creative* relation to the world.

3. In this conception of the Person of Christ, and of the Incarnation of God in Him, we have one which is wholly in keeping with scientific conceptions. It crowns the universe which science studies. There is no "breach of continuity," but a constant process of development in which we see, "first the natural, and after that the spiritual." We witness that which stands forth as the highest conception of human life as being eternal in God, as being that principle and potency of the universe which alone can explain its appearance therein, when the world-organism reaches its highest development in man. We see that it is one God who is working in Nature

and in man, who, because of His immanence therein, appears in due time in human form. It brings to science, not something which it apologetically begs it to accept, but that which it needs to complete it, a first reason, motive, and meaning for the Creation, a satisfactory reading of "the Riddle of the Universe," that solution of "the mystery of the Creation" which can only come from the revelation of its original Ideal and ultimate Goal. It enables us to see the aim of the Divine working in the present, the divinely meant continued evolution of man, as a spiritual Being, with his destiny beyond that grave in which otherwise all our scientific knowledge and work get hopelessly buried at last, and all our material and social advance appears to have no ultimate meaning.

We cannot help feeling that the view of the Person and coming of God in Christ here set forth ought specially to commend itself to the open-minded *Jew*. We cannot forget that it was *along the line of Jewish ancestry* that the Divine working took such effect as to lead to the birth of Jesus as its culmination. He loved His own, and shed bitter tears over what He foresaw should be the consequences of His rejection. We cannot but earnestly desire that the causes which perpetuate that rejection should be removed. This is surely supremely desired by Christ, and it ought to be more seriously

laid to heart than it is by Christians. We cannot help asking, what should hinder even a Jew from accepting the conception of God in Christ set forth in these Epistles? The new feeling of respect for Christ and appreciation of His teaching and life on the part of not a few modern Israelites is matter for great thankfulness. What hinders their further advance? If it be the *definitions* of theology, ought not these definitions to be re-considered. They are human only, and as such imperfect and fallible. Not a few Evangelical Christians believe that they may be better stated without losing anything *essential.* It is a serious thought that human modes of statement may be keeping any from entering the Kingdom of God, as that Kingdom has in its spirituality been revealed in Christ. God is surely more anxious that His "ancient people" should be "saved" than that they should be compelled to accept certain definitions of His Person. In Christ the Jew may see the culmination of his own Hebrew faith and ancestry. He can see the same God as gave Israel the Law, as spake to his fathers in the prophets, and as was trusted in by saints of his race, (whose faith the Christian of to-day can only seek to emulate), coming to them in one of themselves who was a *Son,* and transforming the religion of form, whether legal or ceremonial, into that of spirit and truth. If this Christ ends "the Law," it is only as it was "written

on tables of stone" that it may be "written on the heart." The *Law* for both Jew and Christian is all summed up in *Love*. He may see Him as coming truly to "redeem Israel"—and as willing to die to accomplish it—from a materialism of mind which led to His rejection, and which, persisted in, issued in national ruin. If Judaism still expects the Kingdom of God to come, apart from Jesus Christ, the expectation is a fallacious one. It can never be fulfilled, because towards any Kingdom of God on this earth distinctly Christian influences will have contributed more than any others. It is in the acceptance and spread of these influences alone that the hope can find fruition. To its coming a Christianised Judaism would be perhaps the greatest contribution. Paul looked forward to the time when "all Israel shall be saved"; let us hope and work for the dawn of that day. It is in no "superior spirit" that we say this, but because we believe that in Christ we have the final revelation of God and of man—in its essence, apart from all questions of *form* —the universal and final religion.

Again, we may remark that it is when we see Christianity to be founded in and issuing from the Eternal Purpose of God; when we see how "all things" were *created* "in Christ," and how Christ Himself is the highest expression of the creative

Power in human form, that we understand how it is *necessarily* the universal and final religion. It is because it gives us, not some limited or racial ideal, but the *creative-human* ideal of life, that it can appeal to all, adapt itself to all peoples and all times, and find reception everywhere. As Eucken has said: "Christianity, more than any other religion, seems to be the concern and product of the whole of humanity rather than of any particular part of it," and when it seeks to extend itself it does not retain the typical features of original habitat as other religions do. That which makes "Christianity before all else a religion for the whole of mankind" is "its power to attract to itself the diverse aspirations of different races and nations and focus them all upon one common task" (*Christianity and the new Idealism*, pp. 93, 97). It is because it is the *creative* Ideal that is revealed in Christ, and because the Redemption in Him belongs also to the Divine creative Purpose, that Christianity stands forth as the religion for all men, and that it has as its central principle the very Love that God *is*—a principle which cannot possibly be transcended.

Finally, it is when we realise the cosmic relations of Christ and the unity of Creation and Redemption, when we see how "all things" were created *in Christ*, so that He is "before all things" and "the Head over

all things," that we are enabled to understand how all things are made to serve His cause. It often seems otherwise for the time; but in the long-run this fact becomes manifest. The way in which many different lines were all converging towards one centre when Christ appeared, and the reality of the Divine "preparation of the world for Christ," have frequently been set forth. It was truly "in the fulness of the times" that He appeared. And although His fate seemed outwardly the complete contradiction of a Divine over-ruling interest, we know how "the predetermined counsels of God" were thereby served, and how that which seemed the defeat of Christ was the means of His permanent triumph. Similar lessons may be learned from the pages of Church History. And if to-day there seem to be strong human forces opposing the Divine, there are also Christian influences operating more effectually than ever before. The Power that is over all will in due time manifest itself, and the material advances by means of which men seem to be only serving themselves and furthering their own ideals quite irrespective of Christ, will be made ultimately to serve that cause of humanity in its highest form, which is that of God in Christ. But the results intended by God can only be brought about by the fidelity of His people to *all truth,* and by their earnest co-operation with the Master-Spirit. God works *for*

man *through* man; while the work is Divine, the agents in it are human. Here is the importance of "the Church" which is such a prominent conception in these Epistles.

Note on Theories of Heredity

All theories of Heredity hold that mental and moral, as well as physical, qualities are inherited: the question that has recently arisen is whether "acquired characters"—individual acquisitions—are handed on, and it has been discussed chiefly with reference to bodily characters—"mutilations, modifications due to disease and to use and disuse of special organs." But it is held to apply to mental and moral acquisitions also, and may therefore seem opposed to what has been said of spiritual or religious development.

Darwin and Spencer held that all qualities were transmissible, and that this alone could account for Evolution. The possibility was explained by Darwin by his theory of *pangenesis*, according to which all parts of the body gave off contributions to the germ-plasm, which were therefore inheritable. Spencer explained it somewhat differently, but bringing out the same result, and he held firmly to the theory till the last.

But in recent years a new theory has been advanced by Weismann and is now widely accepted,

although it has also been severely criticised and rejected by several, chiefly German, biologists. His theory is that of the *continuity* of the germ-plasm which is not affected by changes in the body, but is transmitted unchanged, except it may be in certain ways within itself, from generation to generation, so that only congenital or inborn characteristics are transmitted. "Body-plasm" and "germ-plasm" are held to be quite distinct. Hence no external conditions acting on the body can have effects which are transmitted unless the germ-plasm itself is altered. Variations arise from combinations of different germ-plasms. (See a brief statement in Doncaster's *Heredity*.)

Now, of course, there cannot be any transmission of new qualities unless the germ-plasm is altered. But, apart from strictly biological criticism, one naturally asks how these various germ-plasms which characterise and distinguish races and individuals, differing so greatly among themselves, *came originally to exist*, and how they gained their distinctive characters. Man differs from the animals, and animals and men differ widely amongst themselves, in respect of this germ-plasm, although their typical characters remain unchanged. They cannot have become what they are except by modification of what was originally less differentiated, and if the germ-plasm was modifiable in the remote past, why

may it not be so, to some extent at least, continuously? "At some point in Evolution new factors must have been introduced into the inheritance, and the process is still presumably going on" (E. S. Goodrich, quoted below). Weismann himself holds the possibility of modifications by influences which act directly on the germ-plasm, so that their effects will be transmitted. Nourishment, for example, may favour some units more than others. The question is, *What determines such variation of nourishment?* It is held that "there may be competition for nourishment among the different units ('determinants'), so that some increase at the expense of others, and if this process should be continued through a series of generations, certain characters would show a steady increase, while others correspondingly decrease" (Doncaster, as above).

But this seems all that is wanted in order to maintain such gradual development and progress (as well as degeneration) as Evolution shows to have taken place, apart from which there would be no *Evolution*. We do not know all the influences that may affect the germ-plasm, but it seems certain that it cannot remain unchanged. The *progress* of the human race is sought to be accounted for by what is termed "tradition"—the increasingly heightened character of the environment, which each succeeding child enters owing to the acquisitions of its ancestors

But this is not sufficient to explain the difference between a child, say, of the Stone-age, and a genius of some succeeding period. There must be, surely, not only the heightened intellectual and moral environment, but the capacity in the organism to receive and respond to the stimuli from it. If we could imagine such an environment to exist in the Stone-age, would it be possible for any child, who inherits simply the inborn germ-plasm of the men of that age, to become a Plato? This should be possible if the inborn germ-plasm alone is inherited unchanged by generation after generation.

There is also the difference between wild animals and those that have been domesticated. Are not their natural instincts modified and new qualities gained by them? So also in the case of savages as compared with civilised human beings. Are the offspring of those who have been Christianised for several generations identical with those of their savage ancestors—the environment, of course, continuing for them?

It has been acquired *bodily* characters which have been for the most part in question; but what of *psychical* acquisitions? Is the soul of no influence on heredity? What of these acquisitions which most deeply affect the being, such as the *religious* feelings? May not these affect that germ-plasm which really represents the individual? Observa-

tions and experiments have been made mostly on plants and animals, but there is in man a personal, spiritual element which is wholly awanting in plants and exists only to a small degree in animals. The study of seeds and lower organisms can never give a knowledge of all the laws of heredity in *man*. As has been already said, it is really the *spiritual* that determines the *bodily* development.

Weismann's theory probably contains a measure of truth in its denial of the inheritance of bodily *modifications* in the way previously supposed. But it has been severely criticised. Quite recently Max Nordau has repudiated it in the strongest terms. He characterises it as a "monstrous absurdity," and says that "to future historians of science it will be a matter for astonishment that such an extravagant doctrine can have been conceived by a biologist, and accepted, for a time, by serious scientists"; "it is not a scientific hypothesis, but mysticism of the worst kind"; "it is not confirmed by one single observed fact; it is contradicted by all. If acquired characters were not inherited, evolution would be altogether unintelligible and impossible"; for how could one identical germinal substance "produce, one after another, the most divergent forms of life?" Of course, he says, "Not all acquired characteristics are heritable—only those which influence the quality of the germ." "Every individual forms his own germ-

plasm—out of his own resources, and transmits to it the morphological and physiological tendencies which he has himself inherited," but which he is able to modify "in accordance with his own character,"—so that the result may be either improvement or degeneration ("The Degeneration of Classes and Peoples," *Hibbert Journal*, July 1912).

Besides Darwin's theory of pangenesis, other modes have been suggested of how the modifications of the germ-plasm may be effected. It is by no means deemed impossible. As Professor Ed. B. Watson remarks in his paper on "The Cell in Heredity and Evolution," in *Fifty Years after Darwin*: "In the present defective state of our knowledge we may well grant that there may be many a thing between the germ-cell and body that is not dreamed of in our philosophy." In the same instructive volume, Professor MacDougal, of the Carnegie Institute, Washington, says that "the modification of heredity brought about by the direct action of various agencies upon the germ-plasm is now safely established." There are other statements to a similar effect.

The reconciliation of conflicting views may probably be found in the way suggested by the treatment of Heredity by E. S. Goodrich, M.A., F.R.S., in his book on *Evolution* in the *People's Books* series. While accepting Weismann's refutation of the inheritance of "acquired characters," he shows that

"the popular distinction between acquired and not-acquired characters—is misleading." "In a sense, every character, every variation, is partly acquired and partly inherited, and no character is more acquired or more inherited than another." It is not the modification as such that is transmitted; "in every case it is *the capacity to acquire* (Italics ours), to become modified, or to respond, which is really transmitted; the direction and extent of the modification depends on the stimulus." Hence, "Heredity must be defined afresh as the transmission of the factors of inheritance, and not as the re-appearance of characters in successive generations" (pp. 33–38).[1]

This is how heredity has been regarded in the foregoing chapter. It gives us a common-sense view of evolution as resulting from the interaction of the environment with the germinal inheritance, whereby new *capacities* may be handed on. In the case of man the environment becomes not only a physical, but also a mental, moral, and spiritual one. Stimuli of the latter kind must have affected his organism, in its inner qualities especially, and the effects been handed on from generation to generation, not as the actual modifications, but as capacities to re-act to similar stimuli in increasing degree.

[1] In the volume on *Heredity* in the same series, by J. S. B. Watson, B.Sc., the writer distinguishes between "changes on the body of an organism and changes in its germ-plasm" (p. 35).

CHAPTER VII

THE RECONCILIATION OF ALL THINGS IN CHRIST—OF MAN TO GOD AND OF MAN TO MAN—FREEDOM THROUGH THE CROSS

THE appearance of God in Christ was eternally destined to issue in a great Redemptive or Reconciliatory act. In Ephesians the Divine purpose is said to have been "unto a dispensation (or economy) of the fulness of the times, to sum up all things in Christ" (i. 10). It is the *plērōma*, the fulness, or ripeness of the times, "when the pre-Messianic ages were made full." The word for "to sum up" (*anakephalaioō*) means to sum up under one head that which has been separately expressed. It only occurs elsewhere in the New Testament in Romans xiii. 9, where it is said that the Law is summed up in love to our neighbour. Outside the New Testament the word is used for the summing up of the points of an argument or discourse. The article before "Christ" gives us "*the* Christ," the Messiah, and shows that what is in view is some-

thing to be done in the *incarnate* Person. It was something also to be done in Him, not in one moment or fixed point of time merely, but from that point onward. The reference is to "the whole duration of the Gospel times" (see Alford, *in loc.*), as we read in chapter ii. 7, "that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in kindness to us in Christ Jesus." It implies, however, that all *were* represented in Him—recapitulated—so that before God He stood for *all*. Just as the whole preceding creation was summed up in man, in whom at the same time it arose into higher life, so in Christ the whole, including humanity itself and all moral personalities, was recapitulated, and man in the fulness of a higher ethical life of Sonship to God at the same time appeared. It implies with respect to moral beings a *redemption* or restoration; *ana* prefixed to *kephalaioō* (which might in itself mean simply summation) points, as Meyer remarks, to an original unity—"to sum up again, to gather together again." It is to be noted also that, giving effect to the middle voice employed, we have, "to gather together *for Himself* into one all things in Christ."

There is a sense in which, apart from moral considerations, we may think of the universe as being brought back to God. All proceeded from an original unity. In creating, God goes out from

Himself, so to speak,—the *one* becomes so far expressed in *the many*. The creation comes to have an objective existence—out from Himself, over against Himself—in which it is necessarily imperfect, and we can think of it as being, after the purpose of its separate existence has been served, brought back to its original unity and so raised to completeness.

But here there is an *ethical* departure in view. It is not merely a philosophy of *Creation* the Apostle is setting forth, but the fact of moral and spiritual *redemption* and at-one-ment with God in Christ, as we read in verse 7, "in whom we have our redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace."

This moral reference appears also in Colossians (chapter i. 20), "through Him to reconcile all things unto Himself." The word there is *apokatallassō*; the *apo* prefixed to the common word to reconcile, to make at one (*katallasso*, Rom. v. 10 *bis*, 1 Cor. vii. 11; 2 Cor. v. 19, 20) may mean "again" or "back," although it may also denote *completeness* or *thoroughness*. As Lightfoot remarks, it corresponds to *apēllotriōménous*, "estranged," in the following verse, "implying a *restitution* to a state from which they had fallen, or which was potentially theirs, or for which they were destined." But the whole context shows clearly the moral reference.

In man's case the *possibility* of this moral departure from God lay in that *free* individuality which alone could constitute man what God designed him to be, and which only could give him value in God's sight, or, in the language of the Apostle, give God an "inheritance" and "possession" in humanity as the return to His creative love, or the reward of His creative action. God could have no worthy inheritance in a race that was mechanically impelled, or whose relation to Himself was determined for them under laws which left no room for voluntary determination of the Personality. Man may admire beautiful and complex machinery, a tribute to his intelligence or skill, but God looks for *moral* worth, and even a man thinks more of an animal with some dim approach to real affection than of the finest iron machine.

Being thus free in order to be human, men could get away from God as that Ethical Being that He is—some of them very far away, like the prodigal in the parable. The actuality of such departure was manifest in the history of the world as that which we familiarly speak of as *sin*—which means voluntary departure from the true life. Every created, responsible being must have a *self* of his own, and may prefer that self to the Divine Ideal in the measure in which it shines upon him, or in which he feels himself called to it. In man the self-

principle was necessarily centred in an animal, or lower, nature, with strong self-assertive and earthward tendencies. Such a principle was necessary in order to his very existence and progress on the earth, while any higher or Divine principle could only become strong within him through gradual development. The lower animal principle *had* to come first. It is what St. Paul terms "the flesh"; it is the central principle of the "natural" man, and must be transcended if he is to rise into the true Ideal and Spiritual life. It is this nature of "the flesh" (not the body), which is the deepest source of all manner of sin. We all still stand rooted in it; for, like it or not as we may, man is first of all an animal, although he stands high above the *mere* animal, and sin in its manifold forms, sometimes very refined and even spiritual in its seeming, is the outcome of that lower self-centred nature to-day as truly as in the days of Paul and of Christ. Probed to the depths, there is no form of sin that does not have its roots in this self-centred nature of "the flesh." So, living and acting for this lower self, instead of yielding himself up to the Divine influences which sought to draw him upwards—going his own way instead of God's—man became morally and spiritually separated from God, and in time, as self-regarding interests strengthened, he became separated also from his fellows.

These Epistles tell us that God foresaw it all, but

also that He foresaw the ultimate triumph of the spiritual principle. His spiritual influences did not cease to operate, but became adapted to man's need, and as the result of their operation He foresaw the gradual strengthening of the higher principle, and man, in the fulness of the times, rising entirely above the self-regarding life of "the flesh" into the fulness of that life of Love, which is the Divine Life, and thus returning to Himself. Man was created *in* Christ, and in Christ he should yet stand approved as God's son. The creative Ideal was conceived, not in man after the flesh, but in man after the spirit. It was not an animal-man God had in view, but a son to Himself. In this true man, realising the Divine Ideal of man's life, it was God's eternal purpose to reconcile all things to Himself. It meant the uprising in man of the Divine principle of the creation, the life of God Himself in man, taking back, as it were, His world to Himself.

But this reconciliation of all things to Himself in Christ involved a twofold action on the part of the Divine-human Person—one on the human side and one on the Divine—both, of course, finding expression in the one deed.

(1) It was in the voluntary self-sacrificing death of Christ on the Cross that the complete at-one-ment of man in Him with God was realised and manifested. Therefore it is said that "we have

our redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses" (Eph. i. 7), and in Col. i. 20 "peace" is said to have been made "through the blood of the Cross"—the phrase, "through the blood," suggesting sacrifice. Of course, there was no literal shedding of blood; but "the blood" represented the physical life poured forth, as it were, in sacrifice. It was the blood of one who believed that His death would effect what His life and teaching had failed to do — bring God and man into the gracious union which the coming of the Kingdom of God meant essentially. It was in this act of complete sacrifice of Himself to the will of God, of final triumph over the separate will of the flesh, in which His bodily death represented the death of "the flesh" or lower nature in man, that *all men* in Him—just because He was the true representative man—were reconciled to God, made at one with Him, representatively or ideally. Christ as true man stood in "the flesh" as all men must do in order to live on earth. Although He conquered all its temptations and achieved a sinless life, and although "the Spirit" was supreme in Him from the first, "the flesh" was as real to Him as it is to any man, as Gethsemane and the Cross itself bear witness. His death, which was in itself His complete self-surrender to God, represented "the putting off of the flesh" as the ruling principle of the life for all men, that they

might rise with Him into the fulness of the new life of the Spirit. *Man* in Him died to sin and rose to righteousness. His sacrifice, therefore, went up to God as "an odour of a sweet smell," the incense of that perfect at-one-ment which was purposed from all eternity. Hence we read that God made us "accepted in the Beloved." In Him *we* were reconciled. It was something *done* in Christ representatively for us all: "You now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death" (Col. i. 22); "Ye died (in Him) and your life is hid with Christ in God" (iii. 3); "He made us alive together with Christ," etc. (Eph. ii. 1–6). In view of this perfect at-one-ment in Christ, man's sin can be forgiven and even forgotten, as it were, before God; although that does not mean that the consequences of sin cease to take effect on man as he has been constituted by God. It was the sin of a race that has *died* in Christ to the lower life; while, of course, sin, as long as man continues in it, will entail all its evil effects. But we are now under "Grace."

(2) All this was done in the one Divine-human Person, and it all proceeded from God. It was all the working out of the Divine eternal purpose. It all followed from the fact that we were "*created in Christ*." Therefore, although the sacrifice of Christ was naturally interpreted as a propitiatory sacrifice, and although men saw in it the necessary doom of that "flesh"

which in mankind as a whole is "the flesh of sin," it could not have been to propitiate *God* (from whom it all proceeded) with a view of gaining His favour.[1] It was, Paul says, the result of "His grace freely bestowed on us in the beloved." On its Divine side it was all the working of God in Christ—of the Divine wholly possessing the human. It was *God* reconciling all things to Himself, "making peace through the blood of the Cross." "The blood" was, in this aspect, the outward expression of the love of God—of God Himself in Christ. It was God, regarded as transcendent, who in His love for man gave up His beloved Son so to suffer and die. It implies a great sacrifice made by God in order to bring all things into harmonious relation to Himself —not an atonement made *to* God, but an at-one-ment that *God* was making through such a manifestation of His Holy Love as should make actual in men the reconciliation represented for all in Christ. The love so manifested is the moving-power in men's hearts to make and keep them at one with God. Therefore the Apostle's prayer that all might know the greatness of that immeasurable love. At the same time, as we have seen, the end of sin in man was here represented.

[1] For a fuller treatment of the Cross in its various aspects the writer may be permitted to refer to *The Gospel of Reconciliation* and *The Cross and the Kingdom*, 2nd Ed.

The reconciliation becomes actual in individual experience as men die with Christ to the lower self-centred nature—as the individual will is surrendered to the will of God. It is that "dying to live" which Jesus in His teaching called men to, the necessity for which philosophy in its own way repeats.[1]

May we not also say that the acceptance of the personally undeserved suffering of the Cross by the Divine-human Christ is God's means of reconciling us to Himself as the source of a world-order in which suffering and sacrifice are universal elements. It shows us how inevitable these are; so much so that even He in whom God is incarnate in our humanity cannot escape them. And the results prove that the issues are good. Suffering, sacrifice, and death are necessary for the perfecting of our life in God. Their vicarious acceptance is the means whereby good, even in its highest form, comes to ourselves and to others. Hence the call, "Renounce!" "Renounce!" which Goethe heard on every hand. As one of our own poets has put it—

> "But all through life I see a Cross
> Where sons of God yield up their breath:
> There is no gain except by loss;
> There is no life except by death."
>
> DR. WALTER C. SMITH.

[1] For a recent interesting statement from a philosophical standpoint, see Bosanquet's *Gifford Lectures* for 1912, p. 147; only, instead of the Absolute, we think of *God*.

Complete reconciliation with God implies the acceptance of His Will in the order of the universe and in our own experience under it, however hard it may bear on ourselves individually. In such acceptance we come into that union with the Divine Will wherein alone there is peace.

It is this act of God "in Christ reconciling the world to Himself" that gives us the universal Gospel, and opens the way of access to God for every sinner. Because of this Paul burst the bonds of Judaism, and went forth, preaching peace to the Greek and the Barbarian as well as to the Jew. It is because of this that Christianity is a purely spiritual religion, with nothing required of man but to respond to the appeal, "Be ye also reconciled to God."

And, if the reasoning in previous chapters be sound; if man's ethical life be typical of that of all ethical beings in their relation to God, the reconciliation of man to God in Christ applies to the entire universe, embracing "the things in the heavens" as well as "the things upon the earth"; or, as more explicitly stated in Colossians (i. 20), "whether the things upon the earth, or the things in the heavens."

The Reconciliation of Man to Man

This Reconciliation of man to God in Christ represented also, and was meant to effect, the Reconciliation of *man to man.* It contains the principle of the

restoration of *unity* to humanity. The Apostle had naturally in view, primarily, the great outstanding division of his day, that of Jew and Gentile. The Gentile who was supposed to stand "afar off" was "made nigh by the blood of Christ." The idolised "Law," which stood as "a middle wall of partition" dividing Jew from Gentile, causing "the enmity" between them, "even the Law of commandments contained in ordinances," He "broke down," "having abolished in His flesh the enmity,—that He might create in Himself of the two one new man, (so) making peace" (Eph. ii. 13–22). To the Colossians he says, "having blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and He hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the Cross" (ii. 14). The reference in both passages is to "the Law," and the simplest explanation is, that having made man at one with God, gaining for men that "acceptance" which the Law vainly aimed at, the Law was shown to be unnecessary—something that was now, with all that it might be supposed to have against men, null and void, done away with. As in Ephesians it is said He did this "that He might reconcile them both (Jew and Gentile) in one body unto God through the Cross—for through Him we have both access"—not through the ordinances of the Law, but—"*in one Spirit* unto the Father," even the Spirit of the great Reconciliation in Jesus.

Thus the Cross becomes the means of unity and source of *peace*, not only as between man and God, but as between man and man. The result was seen, so far, in the formation of the Christian Church, wherein Jew and Gentile now met in brotherly fellowship and on equal terms. But it has a far wider application in respect of which it has been only as yet very imperfectly realised. We have failed too greatly to make actual in fact that which was represented and made potential for all in Christ. We have not given due prominence to the fact that *the Cross* represents, not only the Atonement of men to God, but of man to man. We have given too exclusively an individualistic application to that which is designed to bring about the actual unity of mankind, to "make peace" everywhere amongst men, to create, in short, "one new man," or, collectively viewed, one true family of God on earth. We say continually that we believe that in the Cross of Christ was fulfilled the promise of the angelic song over Bethlehem's star-light plain:—

"But with the woes of sin and strife
The world has suffered long;
Beneath the angel-strain have rolled
Two thousand years of wrong;
And man, at war with man, hears not
The love-song which they bring,—
O hush the noise, ye men of strife,
And hear the angels sing!"

On the Cross it was far more than a love-song. It was an act of sacrifice, carried out through the thickest darkness that can overwhelm a soul, in an agony that proved the will to the uttermost and that found expression in that awful cry, "My God! My God!" Yet, so far as concerns the reconciliation of man to man, we have remained practically deaf to both the song and the cry. To-day the most Christian (?) nations continue arming themselves to the teeth, vieing with each other in the building of costly armaments and defences against each other, in the maintenance of huge armies and navies that burden their peoples, in the careful training of men to kill their brothers, in the perfecting of instruments on earth and sea, and even in the air, for mutual destruction. It may be said that as long as one nation continues so to arm itself, others must be prepared to meet it. But is there not something *seriously* amiss in this warlike state of Christian nations? What a spectacle it must be to angels, to God, and to Christ, who died to "make peace" and "to make of all one new man!" If it be economically unwise and morally reprehensible; if war, in the main, proceeds from the lower animal nature, what is it in the light of the Christianity—the religion of Love—in which we profess to believe? Surely it looks as if it may be truly said of Christendom, "this people honours me with their lips, but their hearts

are far from me." If it be said that there is no bad feeling in our hearts towards those with whom we may be locked in mortal strife to-morrow, our warlike state seems scarcely consistent with sanity. It is provocation rather than protection, and is likely to be its own Nemesis.

It causes one to ask seriously whether our Christianity is *real* or professed only—a matter of churches and theology, but of little real practical influence, or to put to one's self the still more serious question, whether Christianity actually possesses the power we have supposed it to have? To the last question, fortunately, we can give no hesitating answer. If Christianity were embraced in its truth—if Christ were accepted by men as that which He is—their true life; if they were to seek in earnest to become what they are represented in Him as being, and what there is power in Christ to make them—at one with God and with each other; if the spirit of Love that expressed itself on the Cross and that proceeds from it with adequate influence to inspire every soul open to its reception—the spirit in which "we have all our access to the Father"—were received, there would be peace in the hearts of men and peace on the earth. Does not our fault lie in this, that we have too greatly failed to remember what God really *is* and what at-one-ment with *Him* must mean; that we have too often forgotten that God is *Love*, and really the

Father of us all, and have imagined that we could be at one with Him while we continued to be at war with each other?

The same remarks apply, in a measure, to that *industrial strife* which, since the abolition of slavery and serfdom and the growth of intelligence and of freedom in those who toil, has been characteristic of the relations between Capital and Labour, and has in our own time become so threatening. It is not unchristian for men to seek to obtain what they believe they are justly entitled to, nor for employers to endeavour to hold fast what they, on their side, deem their rights. It is not "a peace at any price" that Christ brings — a peace which would leave oppression or injustice to continue their sway. He said that He "came not to send peace on earth, but a sword." Not a material sword, but that of Truth and Justice searching and dividing the hearts of men. The peace is one which flows from the recognised common humanity of all men, with an equal standing before God. It is the unity of men in the one spirit of love. But if both employers and employed realised the meaning of the Cross as it is expressed in these Epistles, and were animated by the new spirit which proceeds from Christ and which is God in men; if, in the words of Paul, "Christ dwelt in their hearts," and His Spirit ruled in the life; if they

were "a habitation of God in the Spirit," there would be on *both* sides a Divine influence present and operative before which the spirit of strife would be banished, and the things that were just and right and that made for peace alone would be sought and amicably settled. It is the right *spirit* or *feeling* that is wanted to make things right.

In presence of all this warfare and strife the Christian Church cannot be held blameless. We need to come back to the teaching of these Epistles, and think not only of the reconciliation of man to God, but also of man to man. The two must go together, as Jesus also taught personally. In no other way but by the creation of that new *spirit*, or "new man," which was manifested in Christ and which God sought to create in all through the life and death of the Saviour, can warfare in all its forms be abolished and peace reign amongst men brought into unity with God and each other. It is the want of the Spirit of Christ within us that our present condition proclaims. Material considerations may make men less inclined for warfare, the growth of moral feeling may tend to make them ashamed of it, as something belonging to the lower nature; but as long as the *self-life* is the ruling principle there can never be a deep settled peace. It is only God who can create the spirit of universal love in human

hearts, and this is what He seeks to do through the Gospel. It is for the Christian Church, which exists for the furtherance of that Gospel, to take up with greater earnestness this *manward* bearing of the Divine Purpose, both as respects international disputes and the various causes of dispeace in society.

Christian Freedom through the Cross

The Cross also brought to men (if they would), these Epistles teach, *freedom* from all merely human ordinances, even from such as were contained in a Law believed to be Divine in its origin. These things belonged to "the rudiments of the world," not to Christ. The Christian man was delivered from all such impositions by Him in whom he died to the old life and rose into the new. "Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink or in respect of a feast day, or a new moon, or a sabbath day: which things are a shadow of the things to come; but the body (the substance and reality) is Christ's" (Col. ii. 16). Dr. Farrar aptly remarks on this: "If after nineteen centuries the Christian Church has not understood the sacred freedom of this language, we may imagine what insight it required to utter it in St. Paul's day, and how the Jews would gnash their teeth when they heard of it."

They were also delivered from all mere asceticism and voluntary self-humiliations, as if such practices were aids to the true life. In Christ they had everything; in Him dwelt "all the fulness of the Godhead," and in Him they were "made full" (Col. ii. 9). Let them cherish His Spirit as the principle of their life, and they would find *that* within themselves which met all their need. For, as Paul says elsewhere, Christ was *in* them. They were freed also from all fancied necessity of propitiating angels and higher powers (to which certain of the Jews appear to have been prone); for, whatever these might be, they were all *under Christ.* Also from all dependence on merely human wisdom; for in Christ were "hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." They could learn of Him and go to Him direct for themselves: "Take heed," says the Apostle, "lest there shall be any one that maketh spoil of you through his philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ," a warning needed for all time, and never more perhaps than for to-day, when we have so many "new religions" and so much speculation regarding religion. Let them "hold fast the Head" and they would find from Him all that was requisite to nourish and perfect them in the true life.

Finally, Christ on His Cross, by bringing man, in spite of all spiritual opposition, in His perfect sacri-

fice to God, freed men, not only from the power of sin in themselves, but also from all those powers of the spiritual world which might be hostile to man. They fought against *Him*, and sought to invest Him as a garment, but "stripping them off" (the same word as in "putting off the old man" in chapter iii. 9), He triumphed over them, "making a show of them openly," leading them in triumph as a spectacle, as the conqueror did his captive foes (ii. 15). The reference here is no doubt to the angels and demons, some of them good and some evil, which in the common belief of the time, among both Jews and Greeks, were supposed to surround man's life, the evil powers fighting against him and seeking to thwart him in that which was good. But the real redemption was not from those evil powers outside of man, but from *the sinful self*. As disease germs cannot easily fasten on the healthy organism, so these evil powers—if they be real, and they may be so for aught we know—cannot find a lodgement in the soul that is animated by the true spirit of life, although they may trouble and distress it. If St. Paul accepted the current views concerning the evil powers—and it would be nothing to wonder at if he did—they are clearly regarded as only accessory. The real need of redemption is from "the old man" of "the flesh"—from our own lower selves. No powers, embodied or disembodied, could conquer Him who was willing

completely to give Himself up to the will of God, and herein lies for all who "die with Christ" the secret of complete freedom from all fear, and from all that can be against them. As another Christian writer asks, "If ye be Christ's, who can harm you?"

We hear much to-day about getting deliverance from fear and worry, and undoubtedly great is the need therefor. For, if vice slays its thousands, worry and anxiety slay their tens of thousands, and make life a constant torment to many earnest souls of a certain temperament. But if all things are under Christ our Head, if He has virtually subdued all things to Himself, if we have in Him all that these Epistles assert, and if His Spirit rules our life, then, surely, "holding fast the Head" we may have *peace*.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FULNESS OF GOD IN CHRIST: PRESENT RELATION OF CHRIST TO GOD AND TO OURSELVES.

AS we have seen, Christian faith cannot rest content with a merely historically manifested Christ, a brilliant Light that shone for a brief space of time in the world, but now is quenched, a Personality in whom God was manifested in the flesh for a few years in Palestine, but who has now passed wholly beyond our reach. In such a case the brightness of the light, while it shone, would only make the present darkness seem the deeper. Christian faith holds a present relation to Christ as a living Lord and Saviour; to it Christ is still very really "God with us." Christ is not only "He in whom all things were created," and all things also brought back to God; but as representing man in his truth at-one-with God, He becomes a new Divine-human *Head* to the race in the reception of whom as such alone can it find its full true life or become a divinely-ordered Body.

The true life represented in Christ must be voluntarily accepted as our own; our reconciliation with God in Him must become real in our experience; Christ's death to sin in our name must be homologated by us, and, in the power of the Spirit that proceeds from Him, we must rise with Him and be perfected in the new life. All that is representatively ours in Christ must become actually ours in experience, through a faith that receives and constantly looks to Christ as "our life." To "the Church" (of which we shall hereafter speak) He is the Head with whom all the members are in vital union, "from whom all the body, being supplied and knit together through the joints and bands, increaseth with the increase of God" (Col. ii. 19). Or, as stated in Ephesians, "from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in (due) measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love" (iv. 16). From Him also, "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," spiritual teaching is received, and we reach in this connection the highest statement that can be made concerning Christ in His present life: "in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. ii. 9). Let us consider the meaning of this supreme statement and try to see the truth it expresses.

The word rendered "fulness" is *plērōma*, which

was a technical term in later Gnostic speculation, sometimes used to denote the entire Godhead as distinguished from its distributions among æons, etc. The frequency of the term in these Epistles suggests that it was used by the false teachers even in Paul's time with a similar significance. But it is common in the New Testament as denoting simply *fulness* of any kind, and that with which anything is filled up or made complete. Its general sense in the New Testament is that of *completeness*, the whole content of what is spoken of (John i. 16; Rom. xi. 12, 25, xv. 29; 1 Cor. x. 26; Gal. iv. 4; Eph. i. 10, etc.) The meaning here is most probably that which fills up the Deity, *i.e.*, "the sum of the attributes without which God Himself would not be complete" (Williams, Cambridge Greek Testament, *Colossians*); all the fulness of God dwells in Christ, so that there is no need to go to lesser beings. That rendered "the Godhead"—*theotēs*, signifies properly the *Deity*, the essential nature of God, as distinguished from *theiotēs*, "Divinity." "Dwells," *katoikeō*, suggests *inhabitation*, dwelling as in a home or permanent abode. The *plērōma* was not merely temporarily dwelling in Christ, as certain early false teachers said, but *permanently*. The only question that arises is as to the meaning of *sōmatikōs*, an adverb translated "bodily." *Sōma*, of course, means "body," and the adverb must denote *bodilywise*, or *in a bodily manner*. But what is in-

tended by this? Does it mean that the Godhead in Christ still dwells in a *body*, as it did while He was here in the flesh, although a body of far finer material? It would seem that we cannot understand it thus if we take *theotēs* to refer to the essential Deity, which cannot be circumscribed or limited by a material body, however fine we conceive the material to be. It is said, indeed, of Christ that "it pleased the Father (or God) that in Him should all the fulness dwell" (chapter i. 19), which some refer to the historical Christ in the flesh. But it seems rather to have reference to what was ultimately realised in the case of the risen and glorified Christ. It follows the statement that Christ was made, not only the Head of creation, but also of the Church, "the first-born from the dead"—which cannot apply to Him in His life in the flesh. This life from the dead and Headship of the Church were elements in "the fulness" that is spoken of. Alford (with many others) interprets Col. ii. 9 as meaning "manifested corporeally, in His present glorified body (Phil. iii. 21). Before His incarnation it dwelt in Him as the λόγος ἄσαρκος, but not σωματικῶς, as now that he is the λογος ἔνσαρκος." An obvious objection to this is that Christ is not now ἔνσαρκος, but is freed from the flesh. Nor was the indwelling of God in Him in His *body*, but in His spiritual Personality.

The risen and glorified Christ is certainly in

various places of the New Testament represented as possessing a body, a glorified body, or "body of glory." But, while we may believe that He has the power of manifesting Himself in a bodily form, it seems impossible for *us* to think of Him as being at once wholly Divine and yet permanently embodied. The account of the bodily ascension at the end of St. Mark's Gospel does not really belong to that Gospel; the statement that He was "carried up into heaven" in the closing verses of St. Luke's Gospel is (as the Revisers' note) "omitted by some ancient authorities," and the narrative in the opening chapter of Acts is of too dubious authority to be founded on. When in Philippians iii. 21 it is said He "shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, (that it may be) conformed to the body of His glory," the thought of Christ's *parousia* or manifestation in bodily form may be the determining one. When He is described as "sitting at the right hand of God," the sitting there cannot be taken literally, for of course there is no right or left with God. His "right hand" is everywhere, and if we take it as a figurative expression of a fact it may mean that Christ now shares in the Divine Omnipresence. But the primary reference is to His *exaltation*, as we have it in Ephesians i. 20 f.—"made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places (or sphere), far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is

named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come."

If we think of Christ as He *from whom the Holy Spirit proceeds*, the incongruity of supposing Him to be embodied will be seen. It is true that the Spirit proceeded from Him while incarnate, but it was then far less powerful than it became after He had put off the flesh. So marked was the difference that in the Fourth Gospel we read: "This spake He of the Spirit which they that believed on Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet (given), because Jesus was not yet glorified." The presence of the Spirit is frequently identified with that of Christ Himself; in several passages Christ and the Spirit are interchangeable terms. But we cannot think of the Spirit as possessing a body.

Moreover, it is distinctly affirmed, and is one of the cardinal truths of these Epistles, that *the Church* is the Body of Christ, that *we* are the members of the Body of which He is the life, and to suppose that He who thus lives in us and fills us with His power is still in some way separated from us by a body, however subservient to His Spirit that Body may be, seems to place a serious limitation to the spiritual presence and indwelling of Christ; and perhaps the popular conception of Christ as having a body militates against the realisation of His spiritual presence and indwelling.

The assertion in the passage before us is, not that the Divine fulness dwells in the *body* of Christ, but that it dwells in *Him*—in His Spiritual Personality —*bodily-wise.* The adverb gives the manner of the indwelling: "In Him dwells bodily-wise all the fulness of God"—imparted to Him, concentrated in Him. "As in a body" is Bengel's rendering.

The word does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament, nor in the LXX.; for, "in a bodily shape (or form)" (Luke iii. 23) the adjective σωματικός is employed. Lightfoot remarks that "St. Paul's language is carefully guarded. He does not say ἐν σώματι, for the Godhead cannot be confined to any limits of space," and Chrysostom is quoted to the same effect. Much may be said for the rendering adopted by Olshausen (referring to Athanasius and others, ancient and modern), which takes "bodily" as meaning *substantially*—in actual substance, as contrasted, not merely with the typical, but also with all temporary and less complete forms. This finds confirmation, on one side at least, from the use of *sōma* in verse 17 to denote the *substance* as contrasted with the shadow: "which are a shadow of things to come, but the *body* is Christ's." And, on the other hand, it would meet what was probably asserted by some of the false teachers that the Divine indwelling in Christ was only of a temporary or partial character. Dr. John Owen says "substantially or personally."

Dr. Thomas Goodwin prefers *personally*: "by body is meant person, as they that understand the idiom of the Greek tongue know; as *soul* in Hebrew is put for person, so many souls are said to have come out of Jacob's loins (Ex. i. 5); so *bodily* in Greek is taken for personally (*Works*, viii. p. 376); "σωματικῶς, that is, not only in a body, noting out the subject in which, but the *manner*, personally, bodily, as the Grecians put σώμα to express a person, *e.g.*, σώματα πολλὰ τρέφειν, and so Thucyidides, σώμασι πολεμεῖν—so that bodily is personally" (*Works*, v. p. 52). Other examples are given in Cremer.[1]

The meaning is that in the Personality of Christ, freed from the limitations of the flesh, and taken wholly into the Godhead, the Deity dwells in Divine fulness and completeness. Christ is thus in very truth, and in the fullest sense, God with us, God for us, yet God in human form, that is, as He has expressed Himself in a human Personality. The whole fulness of the Godhead has become concentrated in Him in that form in which the Divine Life seeks to live in and fill us and make us eternally His children. It is in Him that the Divine Purpose

[1] The one volume *Bible Commentary* says with reference to "bodily": "usually explained to mean in bodily fashion. Probably we should render 'in the form of a body,' and explain it to mean as an organic whole. The fulness of the Godhead is not distributed among the angels, but exists in its completeness in Christ."

for Humanity has realised itself as in a representative man who becomes the new Divine-human Head of the race, the source of the fulness of the higher eternal life of sonship. Christ has become for us the reservoir, so to speak, from whom we receive the supplies that we need, while we live in vital union with Him: "in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily-wise, and in Him ye are made full." "It is in Him," says Owen, "as the light in the beams of the sun, and as water in a living fountain which can never fail." He is the "candlestick" from whence the "golden pipes do empty the golden oil out of themselves (Zech. iv. 12), into all that are His" (*Works*, x. 167).

This carries us back to that thought of the Eternal Sonship in God as being that in which the creation was conceived, now realised in Christ, and opens out before us the grandest prospects for man. It follows naturally from what was manifested in the humanity of Christ. If God was so incarnated in Him as to form one undivided personality—human, yet Divine, the laying aside of the body freed the Personality from corporeal limitations, so that, as He promises in the Fourth Gospel, He could be with His disciples in a more intimate and abiding manner. While He was in the flesh He was only able to reach a limited circle; now He can be present with all—the Christ who "is all and *in* all"; and in all in all

the power of the Life Eternal. Not only is there no limit now to His Spiritual Presence; but He has realised in Himself all that belongs to man's spiritual and eternal life; the whole Divine fulness dwells in Him, and He is able out of it to impart to all that which they need. This is in harmony also with the sayings ascribed to Christ in the Synoptic Gospels: "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. xviii. 20), and "All authority hath been given unto Me in heaven and on earth," followed by, "and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world," or "the consummation of the age" (Matt. xxviii. 18, 20).

Christ, then, we conclude, is a definite Personality in the spiritual world—in God, as it is said, "your life is hid with Christ in God," and that Personality which Christ is is so completely one with God, so entirely filled by God, that all the fulness of the Godhead dwells therein—not as confined in a body, but substantially, personally and permanently, or as if it were centred in a containing body. Christ is God with us in human *form*—not *body*. The *form* of humanity can be distinguished from the body that is necessary for our existence on the earth; and this human form is in Christ wholly receptive and expressive of the Deity, as He sought to extend His Divine life to man. In other words, in the

humanity of Christ the Divine Ideal was perfectly realised, so that in Him the humanity is filled with and expressive of the Divine, and He is therefore the true Divine-human Head of the race, in whom is centred and from whom proceeds the fulness of that life of sonship to God, in the Ideal of which all are created.

Difficulty from the Omnipresence of God

But here a new difficulty arises, one that has perplexed many minds and caused some to reject this conception of Christ entirely. It is asked, Do not the Fountain and Fulness of the Deity reside in God, or "the Father"? Is not everything in Christ ascribed to Him? and, Is He not for ever with us all? Is He not the direct object of prayer even in these Epistles, as when Paul says, "I bow my knees unto the Father, of whom every family in heaven and on earth is named"? Is not "grace and peace" and every blessing besought of "God our Father"? Do we not "live and move and have our being" in God? Ought we not, therefore, to look for everything directly to Him, instead of to Christ? Why should we need Christ in this relation to us at all?

These questions are natural. And yet when we look at the history of the world, and mark the experience of the great masses of mankind, we cannot

but ask, How much comes from this direct relation to God? We read the story of the old religions and see how for ages men, impelled by their nature to seek for God, were left to grope in the thickest darkness, suffered to form in some cases the most revolting conceptions of the Deity, and to worship in rites indescribable. We see the heathen world groping in the same darkness to-day, or, what is worse, suffered to rest as contented with the darkness as if it were the light. We witness other religions with more enlightenment, *e.g.*, the Mohammedan, firmly believing in a God who is with them and favours them, but under whose supposed sanction they can do the cruellest and most ungod-like things. Men may believe in God, but too often they fashion His image in their own likeness, as they have done even in Christian times, notwithstanding the revelation of God in Christ. Is not God as near to all those as He is to us? Why, then, does He not communicate Himself to them? Why does He not teach them better? Why does not the God of Love, that He undoubtedly is, show His regard for them and help them in their misery, above all in their search for Himself?[1]

[1] We might refer also to the results of non-Christian mysticism—the endeavour to find God immediately, often ending in finding practically a blank—an abyss of which nothing could be said.

There is no question of the omnipresence of God, or of His desire to communicate Himself to all. Wherever there has been susceptibility to God in His truth, God has entered the soul according to the measure of that susceptibility. In almost all religions there have been gleams of His Presence, and in some outstanding personalities that Presence has dwelt in no small measure. Since the *Creation* was conceived "in Christ," the Divine immanent Spirit has been moving towards its realisation everywhere; but, like all evolutionary processes, the progress has been extremely slow, and sometimes apparently there has been (as in natural evolution) retrogression instead of advance. Not till God could manifest Himself increasingly in His *transcendency* could He become known in His truth to men. We have sought to show in a previous chapter how in Israel He found susceptibility, and, through men of prophetic nature, was able increasingly to make Himself known and to communicate Himself, till in Him who was a perfect Son the Father could completely reveal Himself, and do for men what was necessary to deliver them from that in themselves which was the greatest obstacle to His self-communication. Christ thus became the complete Mediator of the knowledge of God to men, and of that life of Sonship which was fully realised in Himself. God in Himself is infinite, unsearchable; He can only be known as

He can reveal Himself or make Himself known. In Christ we have a Personality at once human, so that we can understand it, partake of it, be conformed to it; at the same time one with, filled by, and expressive of the essential Deity, so that in Him we have God with us in true human form, freed from bodily limitations. The only answer to these questions—the only answer which preserves the reality of God—is that, since God is Spirit, He needs an adequate organ for His manifestation; and such an organ for His complete manifestation and work on our behalf He found in Christ. It is only through Christ that we adequately know God and can come to God; it was only through Christ that God could come effectually to men, and in Him He still comes to us. It is through the preaching of *Christ* to those who sit in darkness that we can bring to them the light that enables them to know and find God. Here is the obligation that lies on Christians. God has put it in man's own power to banish the darkness: the responsibility for it rests with us. Missionary experience often finds souls very near God; only waiting for the window of the soul to be opened, as it were, in at which the light will stream and be gladly welcomed. There is evidence of a preparatory Divine working within, and everywhere the revelation of God in Christ finds a response in human souls.

Harmony of the Doctrine of God and Christ

There is really no contradiction between the universal presence of God and that in Christ. There is no *separation* between God and Christ. Christ *is* God in human form. In Christ we *do* come to God, even to the Father, since "all the fulness" dwells in Him. Real coming to *God* is always *ethical*: we come to God as we come into unison with that which God *is*; not merely when we think we come to that which we have called "God." And what God is is just that which fills Christ, so that in coming to Him we come unto God, as God has made Himself known to us, and as He actually comes to us in His character of Holy Love. Any other coming to God than to this Ethical Being—this God who is Holy Love—is purely imaginary, whether among "the heathen" or amongst so-called "Christians."

"God is *one*," Jesus said, and it is the one God who fills Christ and is present with us in the Spirit that comes through Christ. If "the Son" in God was that in which the creation was conceived, this "Son" is not a *different* Person from God as "Father," but is God *as* "*Son*," a "Person" more nearly in the original sense of the word, which was derived from *personare*, "to sound through," and

denoted the mask through which a character in a play spoke his part. One individual could thus have or sustain more than one "person." The modern sense of the word as denoting an *individual* has given occasion for a Tritheistic conception of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, as if it meant something like three separate Divine Persons or individuals, instead of one God, and has led to its rejection by many. Those who framed the doctrine expressly repudiated such a meaning. But while the unity of God must be maintained, if God is an *ethical* Personality, which He must be to be *God*, He must have an ethical content or character. He must conceive Himself as standing in moral relationship to that which is thought as ethical Personality *other* than Himself; which yet, as eternal, cannot be separate from Himself. It must be a distinction *within* Himself, and apart from such a distinction there can be neither Righteousness nor Love nor even Personality. This thought of *another*, which at the same time can only be the "image" or reflection of *Himself*, is "the Son," in the Ideal of whom the world to be crowned by man is conceived and created.[1] What we have in Christ, therefore,

[1] We must also distinguish between God as He is in Himself, and God as He passes into the creation to communicate the Divine Life to man as it becomes realised in Christ. "The conception of a God-man, of a Saviour, of God revealed in evolution, brings out the antithesis of God

is the manifestation of God in His ethical truth in the form of Sonship toward Himself, human Sonship, since Christ was human, but essentially the Sonship eternal in Himself. It is God in human form, and this Divine humanity remains for ever as the manifestation and the presence of God with us, while God is at the same time present as the Infinite Spirit, and in all the forms in which He has conditioned His Being for the creation. As Christ says in the Fourth Gospel, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father, and, "if a man love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him and make our abode with him."

It is in *the Spirit* that this Divine Presence is with us: it is in "the Holy Spirit" that we have the complete harmony of the presence of God and of Christ. This is made specially prominent in the Epistle to the Ephesians. As we have seen, everything originates with and is the working of "God, the Father of glory," who is "over all and through all and in all." He is *in* all by His Holy Spirit: "ye are created for a habitation of God in the Spirit." That Spirit, by means of whose indwelling God is in us, was doubtless always present with

Father and God Son, and the very conception of this relation implies God the Spirit which proceeds from both" (Dr. Paul Carus, *Primer of Philosophy*, p. 101).

men, and was, as already said, increasingly realised and effective in one special line. In Christ that Spirit found complete expression and even embodiment, and came thus to men with new power of manifestation on the Divine side, and of realisation on the human side. The real character of God was thus made known, and the influences by which He was reconciling the world to Himself were thus brought to bear on the human spirit. The Spirit of God was felt to come as a holy, saving Power—as the spirit of the new life realised and manifested in Jesus Christ, in which His own abiding presence, divine and human, was felt to come. The Spirit came as "the Spirit of Christ," *one* with the Spirit of God. It was a Holy, Ethical Spirit in which Christian men realised that they had the real Presence of God with them, not only as "the Father," but as "the Son," both in His essential Deity and in His human oneness with the Father. There was this new element in the Spirit, or rather, the Spirit came to them in this new form to raise them into the life of Sonship realised in Christ. There was "one God, one Lord, and one *Spirit*," in which the one God and the one Lord were both with them.

God's presence, as being that of *Spirit*, must be *mediated* in order to be universally and effectually realised. It is so mediated in Nature in a thousand

ways for the maintenance and advancement of our physical and earthly life, and so as to constitute a Providence that "makes all things work together for good to them that love God"—that is, who live in harmony with His will. In Christ that Presence in its fulness is mediated, specially as the power of our higher spiritual life, as that was conceived in the image of the Divine Sonship. That which we have of God within ourselves "by nature," or to which we can by our unaided efforts raise ourselves, is not adequate to meet our need. We require help from God—a Saviour who can visit, enlighten, help, encourage, make His "grace sufficient for us and perfect His strength in our weakness," in a word *be* "our life." To those ends "all the fulness of God" is centred in Christ, and is conveyed to us in that Spirit which God is as He is in Himself and as He fills Christ—the Spirit of Holy Love. Receiving this Spirit into our hearts to live in us, yielding ourselves up thereto, we have therein the indwelling of God and of Christ. We have at one and the same time God as our God and Father in all the reach of His Being and Providence, and Christ as our Saviour, Teacher, and Friend in adaptation to our need. There is great comfort and encouragement in the thought of the abiding, ever-present Divine humanity in Christ.

"Though now ascended up on high,
He bends on earth a brother's eye;
Partaker of the human name,
He knows the frailty of our frame.
Our fellow-sufferer yet retains
A fellow feeling of our pains;
And still remembers in the skies
His tears and agonies and cries.
In every pang that rends the heart
The Man of Sorrows had a part;
He sympathises with our grief,
And to the sufferer sends relief."

Believing in the revelation of God in Christ, our hearts go out in loving devotion and filial trust to our gracious Heavenly Father. But our necessities will sometimes lead us to think specially of God our Father, at other times of Christ our Saviour, or again, of God as Holy Spirit (witness, *e.g.*, Livingstone's prayers in his most critical moments, in which pleadings with God and with Christ are intermingled). These, however, are but different aspects in which we view the one God; there is no separation. To employ an illustration we have used elsewhere,[1] we may say that, just as living in the sunshine we have the real presence of the light and of the sun by means of which it becomes manifest and effectual for us, so in the Holy Spirit we have at once the presence of the Father and of

[1] See *The Holy Spirit* by the present writer (National Council of Evangelical Free Churches).

Him in whom that presence is supremely mediated. In the sun in the heavens the whole fulness of the light, for this world at least, dwells, so to speak, and in the radiation which visits us so as to make our physical life effective we have a physical analogy to the coming and indwelling of God and of Christ in the Holy Spirit. Only, we must remember that the Presence is *spiritual*, and none the less real and effective, although it cannot be physically seen or felt.

CHAPTER IX

THE NEW LIFE

WHAT we have in Christ is a new life animating those who receive Him: it is "a new creation." Let us view now the character of that life as it appears in these Epistles and see whether it be such as will bear out its ascription to a Divine Authorship. Is it worthy of God and all He is said to have done in order to produce it? Is it really the Divine life in man?

Whatever may be thought of the theology of these Epistles, the high character of the Christian life as therein set forth is beyond dispute. There cannot, in fact, be a purer or loftier conception of life. Without supposing that there was no high ethical teaching or examples of noble character in the pre-Christian Greek-Roman world, there was certainly nothing like this Christian teaching and character to be seen in that world before Christianity entered it. Professor Ward Fowler says of Christianity in his Gifford Lectures: "Though grown on soil which had borne other crops, (it) was wholly new in structure

and vital principle. I say this deliberately after spending so many years in the study of the religion of the Romans, and making myself acquainted in some measure with the religion of other peoples. The essential difference, it appears to me as a student of the history of religion, is this, that whereas the connection between religion and morality had been so far a loose one—at Rome, indeed, so loose that many refused to believe in its existence, *the new religion was itself morality*, but morality consecrated and raised to a higher power than it had ever yet reached." There was "a great gulf fixed between the old and the new" (p. 466).

But it was not morality merely, it was something more: it was the Love that is the source and the crown of all morality. In that new life in those human souls, animated by a self-transcending love to Himself and devotion to the things that were of God, rather than to "the things on the earth," God must have found a satisfaction such as none of His other works could give Him. Many of these early Christians were very poor, many of them were slaves, but in them there was a splendour in the sight of God to which the glory of the Cæsars or the brightness of suns and stars could not even be compared. He found in such lives that which His creative Love had been seeking—that which He had gone forth creating to find—which He had found supremely in

Christ as His Son, and now found through Him in these Christ's brethren.

If we remember what many of those who by the Apostles' preaching of "Christ" were lifted into this new life had been before the Gospel reached them, we cannot surely doubt that the power that could so effectually operate on them was Divine, as manifestly the working of God as aught that we witness in Nature, even much more manifestly Divine. This creates a strong presumption that the *teaching* through which it came to them was in its substance true. If we consider what is said in these Epistles of the Christian life, we shall see also the witness that is borne by it to the historic Christ; and we may be reminded with advantage of the character that ought to mark ourselves as Christians.

1. *What they had been.*—The immorality of these Greek cities was notorious, "and such," says Paul, "were some of you." Such had been some of those to whom he is writing now. In Ephesians we have some spoken of "who, being past feeling gave themselves up to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness" (Eph. iv. 19): "the things done of them in secret," it was a shame even to mention (v. 12). We find his converts described as having been "dead through trespasses and sins," wherein they "walked according to the course of the world—among whom we also all once lived in the lusts of our

flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest" (ii. 1, 3). They had "no hope" and were "without God in the world" (ver. 12); they were "alienated (from God) and enemies in their mind in their evil works" (Col. i. 21), living in the indulgence of the vices which they are now to put away from them as belonging to "the old man" (Col. iii. 5–10), or to "the flesh" that had been crucified with Christ.

2. *The Ideal they had accepted.*—This was simply *the true life* as manifested in Christ; especially, and as comprehending all, in His death to all that belonged to man in the flesh merely, and in His resurrection to the life of the Spirit—in the Love which was on the Cross the crowning expression of His life and the principle of the new life of the Spirit. This is why there is so little reference to the details of the life of Christ in Paul's writings—the death and resurrection covered everything. But it was not merely an adaptation of that idea of dying and rising again which is found in so many religions, drawn probably originally from the death and resurrection of the sun and of nature. It was a definite act in the Person of one who had lived in the flesh and died for all as the expression of an infinite Divine Love; who had not only set the Ideal before them, but sent forth the *motive power* which could make it effectual in their lives. Nor

was it a vague dying and rising again they were called to, but a definite dying to *sin* and "the old man" and rising to a new life of Love and Holiness. The life that was set before these converts was that of "the new man" in Christ, dead with Him to the old life and risen with Him to the new, which was to be regarded as the true and eternal life. It was for them, as men who had died with Christ, to set their affections (or mind) no longer on the things that are on the earth, but on the things that are above, where Christ is—and where their full life is hid with Him in God (Col. iii. 1–3). Their ambitions and hopes were to rise above the world and all that is in it. But while living in the world, they were to seek to give full expression to all that belonged to the new spiritual man in Christ. "Speaking the truth" (or as the R.V. margin, "dealing truly") "in love, they were to grow up in all things unto Him who is the Head, even Christ" (Eph. iv. 15); Christ was to dwell in their hearts through faith (iii. 17); their Ideal was "the measure of the stature of the full grown man in Christ" (iv. 13). Love was the root, forming stem, branches, and fruit of the new life; they were to "walk in Love as Christ loved us and gave Himself for us" (v. 2); "rooted and grounded in Love," they were to seek to be "filled unto all the fulness of God" (iii. 17, 19). It was no merely other-worldly life they were called to:

Love made that impossible; sonship to God was expressed in brotherhood to man. Not for idle dreaming of future bliss had God called them. They were "God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works which God afore prepared that we should walk in them" (ii. 10); to be "holy and without blemish before Him in love" (i. 4); "to be an habitation of God" Himself "in the Spirit" (ii. 22) and a "possession" or "inheritance" in which He should rejoice (i. 14, 18). They were looking forward to a future presentation of themselves unto God, and therefore Paul was earnestly "admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom that he might present every man perfect in Christ" (Col. i. 22, 28).

Could there be a higher Ideal set before man than this? Their acceptance of it shows what a new Spirit had taken possession of them.

2. *In practical detail.*—We have not only the Ideal set before these new converts, but the various exhortations addressed to them gives it in practical detail.

(1) *Negatively*—which shows further what they had been, or the kind of life they had been called from. They were to put to death, as belonging to "the old man" who died with Christ, "fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire and covetousness which is idolatry" (Col. iii. 5; cf. Eph. v. 3). Sins of the

flesh, arising from unrestrained desire, were very common amongst those who dwelt in those Greek cities; in both Epistles, therefore, these are specially mentioned and condemned. The close association of "covetousness" with these in Ephesians v. 3 and Colossians iii. 5 suggests that it may mean *inordinate desire* of a lustful nature, which, as being fixed on human persons, would certainly be idolatry; in Ephesians iv. 19 some are said "to work all uncleanness" with greediness (πλεονεξία, the same word as is above translated "covetousness"), and again in Ephesians v. 5, "the covetous man who is an idolater" is conjoined with the "unclean person." Most interpreters, however, take "covetousness" in its simple meaning of *greed*, inordinate desire of getting more, and regard it as referring to that greed of gain which was the other leading vice of the heathen world, and is truly the worship of the creature rather than of the Creator. Both have their roots in the "passion" or "evil *desire*" of the lower (animal) nature. Our Lord had earnestly warned His disciples against covetousness in the usual sense of the word, and had characterised devotion to gain as Mammon-worship in opposition to devotion to God and His service. Perhaps in Colossians iii. 5 *all* forms of passion and evil desire are meant to be marked as "idolatry," because, whatever objects they may be directed towards, these take the place of God for the soul.

They are also to put away every kind of falsehood or untruthfulness, dishonesty, drunkenness, shameful speaking (abusive or coarse language), foolish or unseemly jesting, wrath (or angry outbursts), slander, railing (A.V. "blasphemy," which it cannot mean here; Eph. iv. 25 f.; Col. iii. 8). They must study to subdue all such *inward* motions as belonged to the past, not only of sinful passion, evil desire and covetousness, but also all unreasonable and sustained *anger*, with all *malice*, or ill-feeling towards any. All the evils condemned still characterise, more or less, the lower nature, and although the catalogue might well be enlarged for to-day, they are just the things that separate man from God and that work the worst evils of man on his fellows.

(2) *Positively*, they were to see to it that they walked "worthily of their high calling of God" (Eph. iv. 1), "worthily of the Lord unto all-pleasing, bearing fruit in every good work" (Col. i. 10). Having "put off the old man," they must "put on the new man, that is, being renewed unto knowledge after the image of Him that created him" (Col. iii. 10), "that after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth" (Eph. iv. 24). As God's chosen people, they were to "clothe themselves" with all that belonged to the character of God (Eph. v. 1) as seen in Christ; with "compassion" (*oiktirmos*, pity, compassion, mercy), "kindliness"

(*chrēstotes—chrēstos* in Eph. iv. 32), which Trench describes as a grace "pervading and penetrating the whole nature, mellowing there all which would have been harsh or austere"; "*oiktirmos* may move us to do kind things, but *chrēstotes* makes us do them in a kindly way." "With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love" (Eph. iv. 2), "and forgiving one another, if any man have a complaint against any, even as the Lord forgave you, so also do ye" (Col. iii. 13). Humility, lowliness, meekness, imply a spirit that has a due regard for others, conscious of our own defects, and remembering that all that any man has he has received of the Lord, not for self-assertion or aggrandisement, but for the good of all in the sight of Him to whom all are equally dear. The humility here enjoined was in the non-Christian ethics deemed unworthy of manhood, and it is just here that we perceive the deeper insight created by the new spirit; for it is in the capacity to stoop (without abjectness) that true greatness lies (see Philip. ii. 1 f.). "Long-suffering" or "patience" is the love that "beareth all things" without anger or irritation. In all they were to strive earnestly to maintain the *unity* of the Christian brotherhood—"the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. iv. 3). "Above all" they were to "put on Love, which is the bond of perfectness," *i.e.*, "the power which unites

and holds together all those graces and virtues which make up perfection" (Lightfoot; Col. iii. 14). They were to let "the peace which Christ gives rule (arbitrate, 'settle all questions') in their hearts," to which peace they were called in one body; thankfulness, not murmuring, should characterise them (Col. iii. 14, 16). As the members of one body they were to live uprightly and honestly, "speaking truth every man with his neighbour." They were to "work with their hands that which is good," so that they might not only be able to live honestly themselves, but have something to give to him who had need. Their speech should be such as would "edify," be helpful to those with whom they held converse (Eph. iv. 25 f.). They were to "walk"—conduct their life—as wise men "buying up," to good purpose "the opportunity" which the fleeting time afforded (Col. iv. 5), cherishing a cheerful spirit and submitting to one another "in the fear of Christ," or "out of reverence for Christ" (Weymouth; Eph. v. 18, 20). High as the Ideal was, and unworldly as were their ambitions and hopes, the practical good life on earth is ever kept in view.

Particular counsels are given to husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants (bond-servants or slaves). The married men were to love their wives, avoiding all "bitterness of spirit," loving them even as the Lord the Church,

even as their own bodies. Husband and wife should be as *one*. Children were to obey their parents in all things "in the Lord," honouring them as enjoined in "the first commandment with promise." Fathers were to see to it that they did not irritate—fret or harass—their children, lest they should become sullen or morose, or be discouraged; they were to bring them up tenderly with Christian admonition or advice. Servants (slaves) were to obey their masters (lords) according to the flesh, eager to please and with simplicity of motive, "as unto Christ; not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but as servants of Christ"; let their hearts be in their work, "with good will doing service as unto the Lord and not unto men"; and here was their comfort and encouragement: "Knowing that whatsoever good thing each one doeth, the same shall he receive again from the Lord, whether he be bond or free"; "knowing that from the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance; ye serve the Lord Christ, with whom there is no respect of persons."

Masters were to render to their servants "that which is just and equal—deal justly and equitably with them—knowing that they, too, had a Master in heaven." They were to "do the same things" towards their servants, or slaves, as they desired towards themselves, "and forbear threatening, knowing that He who is both their Master and yours is in

heaven, and there is no respect of persons with Him" (Eph. v. 22–vi. 9; Col. iii. 18–25, iv. 1).

The Christian preachers could not interfere with the firmly rooted custom of slavery, but they introduced the principle which should prove destructive of it. The slave was made a free man of the Kingdom, a son and heir of God, equally with his master; both had one common Lord and one common hope from Him; things that were equitable, just, and right belonged to the slave as truly as to his master —ideas that had never been heard of before, and such as would have been scouted by the highest and most ethical philosophy. The idea of *one* common humanity in Christ—quite a new conception—underlies the whole. There is but *one* true Body of which all are members—members of that Body and of each other; so that, if the Ideal were realised, they *could not* wrong one another, for they would thereby be wronging themselves.

What higher conception can we have of true individual and social life? Is it not just what is needed to make human character true and society happy? Would not most of the evils of the past have been avoided had this Christian *life* been more earnestly enforced and exemplified as that which is alone *Christian*? Would not its practice now solve our greatest problems and meet most of the evils of

our time? It is *true life* that is wanted, life lived to God and going forth to man in that spirit of Justice, Truth, and Love that God *is*. As one who does not call himself a Christian has recently said with reference to the great social problem: "Nothing will touch it but a new and better spirit in all who work and who organise work—a new social, moral, and religious reformation" (Frederick Harrison).

We cannot but ask also, *whence* was this new, high, and true conception of human life derived? How did it come to shine with such clearness before the eyes of St. Paul, or whoever it was that wrote these Epistles? It was *a new thing in the world*. If certain of these graces and virtues had been commended by others, how do we come to find them so wonderfully unified in these Epistles? And not only unified, but freed from all particularism, whether Jewish or Greek, simply human, and inspired by a Spirit that could make them realities in the life? Surely they had been seen exemplified in some outstanding Personality who had wielded an influence such as no moralist or philosopher had possessed, and who had *done something* to win the hearts of these men and women to Himself, and to implant the principle of that new life within them. One who had *authority* also, as their *Lord*, and who could enable them in their weakness and trials to pursue this Divine

Ideal. The character is just that which was seen *in Christ*; the Ideal could only be derived from Him. His love was the inspiration, and His power, with the prospect held out in Him, the encouragement, to take it up and follow it out in earnest. The whole conception is inseparable from the Person and work of Christ, and we have a strong witness here to the reality of the historical Jesus.

All these moral qualities were to be sought after and manifested by them as *believers in Christ*—a Christ in whom God had visited them in His grace and reconciled them to Himself, through whose sacrifice they had that forgiveness of sins which was at the foundation of the new life—a Christ who had lived and died for them and risen again. They were to regard themselves as men who had themselves died and risen with Christ; whose minds were therefore to be fixed on those "things above" which characterised Christ, not on the perishing things of earth. These "things above" were to be found by them as "continuing in the faith," as "holding fast the Head," as drawing from Christ their spiritual nourishment, strength, and support. It was not a new morality, enjoined from without, but a new spiritual life, quickened within. They were men and women in whom the Spirit of God and of Christ dwelt. It was not in their own strength merely that such characters could become

theirs, but only through the power of the indwelling Spirit. It was God's own life of Holy Love expressing itself in them, according to their measure, as it had expressed itself in its fulness in Jesus Christ.

But while the Spirit of God and of Christ *moved* them thereto, they had to exert all their own energies in response to that Spirit. While they were to be "strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might," they must also "put on the whole armour of God that they might be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." They were engaged in a conflict, not with flesh and blood merely, but with insidious, invisible spiritual powers—which was true, whether we take it literally or not. Therefore let them arm themselves with that panoply of God, each portion of which is in itself ethical or spiritual. The loins must be girded by Truth, the heart guarded by the breast-plate of Righteousness, the feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace; faith must be held fast as a shield on which the fiery darts of the evil one might be quenched; the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, must be grasped for the offensive. And at all times they must live the life of "prayer and supplication in the Spirit," and not only praying, but "watching thereunto, in all perseverance and supplication for all God's

people." The high ethical life was thus to be the outcome of a new spiritual life and fellowship with Christ and with God. By receiving Christ they were brought within the circle of God's people and under His saving power. It was now for them to "walk in Him," that is, to "live and act in vital union with Him, having the roots of your being firmly planted in Him, and continually building yourselves up in Him" (Col. ii. 6, 7, Weymouth's translation). It was simply "Christ is all and in all." And in no other way can the highest morality be reached than by the reception of God Himself, as He comes to us in the Spirit of Christ, producing in some real measure His own life in men, who, in response to that Divine Spirit of life, co-operate with God, working out what He works in them.

We have here no theories of conversion, but the reality is there. If the tree is known by its fruits, "the doctrine that is according to godliness" stands approved by the *life* to which those Christian converts were raised.

The Christian life has always been essentially the same in kind, and it is still a "new life" as compared with the ordinary life of the world. We are not born into it by nature-birth, but must rise to it by voluntary choice. It is this *life* that is the essential thing in Christianity—this life above the lower self

and the power of the passing world—this life of devotion to God and to all that He is—this life of the universal, self-transcending *Love* that God is. Life is the one great possibility given to all men. Apart from all theological questions, the great concern for every man is what his life shall be. The supreme value of Christianity is, that in Christ the possibility of rising to a life that is Divine and eternal is set before us. For this God has created us, and to this He has redeemed us in Christ. It is to this *life* we are called. Only by obeying the call can we be raised above ourselves to that which is the life of God in man. And only as this life is lived in the world and for the world, as Christ lived it, can the world be blest. No intellectual difficulties ought to prevent anyone from obeying the call. It commends itself to every man's conscience in the sight of God—to the Ideal that in some measure shines in all. Yet it is not merely a choice that is asked of us, as if by an act of our own will we could raise ourselves into this higher life. It is a *response to God* as He comes reconciling us to Himself in Christ, a reception of the Divine Spirit as it comes to us through Christ and as the spiritual power of God is centred in Him for our life. It is through this response to God in Christ—this reception of Christ as that which He is "made to us of God," that that new spiritual power enters us which

is the inspiration and strength of the new life, and which we find to be adequately operative in us as we live in fellowship with Christ. While, apart from a personal relation to Christ, Christianity approves itself ethically as the right life-choice, only that Christianity in which Christ is central will prove effective in experience. And only by faith in Him do we stand in the Christian succession.

CHAPTER X

THE CHURCH AS THE BODY OF CHRIST

WHILE the Christian life is centred in individuals, each holding a personal relation to Christ, the *Church*, as the community of such, holds a prominent place in these Epistles, in Ephesians especially. It is "the Body of Christ" in no merely figurative sense, but in most literal reality. While in the flesh, Christ had an individual human body, by means of which the Divine life that was in Him found manifestation and organs of expression and action in the world. When He put off that body He had no longer those organs of manifestation and action; but the putting off of that body was to be the means of His presence and operation in the world through a new and far more extensive Body which He should gather to Himself: "He ascended far above all the heavens that He might fill all things." The Church was to be to Him such a Body as should be "the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." "Fulness" here most probably means *comple-*

tion, as it does elsewhere—as some ancient and modern interpreters have taken it. Westcott renders "the fulness of Him who reaches His fulness through all things in all." Of course, we cannot think of Christ in Himself—"in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead"—as needing completion by means of the Church. But, as Lightfoot points out, His *plērōma* is here treated of, not in His relation to God, but to the Church as His organ and manifestation in the world. Until His *plērōma* is found in the Church, His presence and work in the world are incomplete. While He certainly fills all things, He is Himself, as represented by His Body, the Church, filled—completed—as that Body increases in fulness and grows up into "the full stature of the perfect man in Christ Jesus." "All things," says Westcott, "are contributing to Him, and He Himself finds His fulness in the sum of all that He brings into a living union with Himself. Thus the Church is His Body, in which, gathering to itself the first fruits of creation, He is Himself presented to the eye of faith" (Ephesians). But whether we accept this interpretation or not, a *Body* is certainly a necessity for Christ conceived as the *Head*: a Head without a Body is as incomplete as a Body without a Head.

Each man and woman who received Christ as the Life was thereby a member of this the new Body of Christ. Each was able to bear a part in the manifes-

tation and service of Christ. "We are members of His body"—one with Him and with each other, even as husband and wife are one (Eph. v. 29 f.). As St. Paul had said to the Corinthians, "Know ye not your bodies are the members of Christ"; "ye are the Body of Christ, and severally members thereof" (1 Cor. vi. 15, xii. 27). Of this Body Christ is the Head, and each member maintains his place in it by "holding fast the Head." From Christ as the Head the whole Body receives its nourishment, so that it may "increase with the increase of God" (Eph. iv. 16; Col. ii. 19; cf. Rom. xii. 4 f.; 1 Cor. x. 17, xii. 12 f.). Its ideal is "the measure of the stature of the fulness (*plērōma*) of Christ."

Through this Body Christ is to be increasingly present and operative in the world. Various ministries were provided by Him for "the building up" of the Church so that it might become an efficient organ of His manifestation. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, these were given "for the perfecting of the saints"—not, however, as an end in itself merely, but "unto the building up of the body of Christ" (Eph. iv. 11 f.). The mention of "evangelists" shows that the enlargement or extension of the Church is contemplated. The object of it all is that Christ may have a complete and effective Body for His manifestation and work in the world. As all believers are actually members of this

Body—becoming such simply by their reception of Christ—*ideally* this Body of Christ embraces all men. As we have seen, all were created and redeemed in Him. The work of the evangelist in preaching the Gospel was meant to bring all men into vital relation to Christ, so that He might actually "fill all things" (or be through all things filled), and that through Him God might be "all in all." The completion of the Church would thus mean the full salvation of the world and the complete fulfilment on earth of that purpose of the creation which was realised in Christ as "the first-born among many brethren." It would be the complete divinisation and socialisation of mankind.

The conception of the Church as the Body of Christ is thus a very grand one, and we therefore read that it was by means of it that "the principalities and powers in the heavenlies should behold the manifold wisdom of God." It was in this *Church* that God was to have His great "possession" and "inheritance." Therefore this Church was very dear to Christ: "He loved the Church and gave Himself up for it, that He might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, that He might present the Church to Himself a glorious (Church), not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish"—as a perfect Bride before Him (Eph. v. 25f.). Not that Christ instituted the Church in any

set words or formal manner; but He looked forward to it as that by means of which the purpose for which He died should be carried on to its fulfilment, and as He had been training His disciples to be the leaders therein. For the sake of this Church, the object of His love and sacrifice, God had "given Him to be Head over all things" (Eph. i. 22). The Church is thus everything to Christ, for it is in truth *Himself* as He becomes anew embodied in the world for the consummation of His Divine work therein. The Church was also very dear to Paul, in whom so much of his Master's Spirit was dwelling, so that he could rejoice in his sufferings and fill up on his part "that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake which is the Church" (Col. i. 24). Not as if Christ had not done enough—although it sometimes seems as if He had not, the response is so slow and imperfect. His followers must be prepared and willing "to suffer with Christ," enduring all that is necessary for the full fruition of His purpose, and Christ still suffers in them; for if all the *members* suffer when one member does so, much more must this be true of the Head.

The Church is also represented in these Epistles as a Temple of God, "a House of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets," of which Christ Himself is the chief corner-stone, "in whom all the building (A.V. rather than R.V., 'each

several building,' *m.* 'every building') fitly framed together groweth into a holy temple in the Lord—for an habitation (fixed abode) of God through the Spirit" (Eph. ii. 20–22). But this is in keeping with the idea of the Church as the Body of Christ. While here in the flesh *He* was God's true Temple, and as the Life of the Spirit which filled Him and constituted Him such extends itself to others, they unitedly form the Temple of God on the earth—"the habitation (or fixed dwelling) of God through the Spirit."

The Unity of the Church

The Church as the Body of Christ was, of course, conceived as a *Unity*. There were particular "Churches" in existence, as these Epistles addressed to them show, but all were embraced in *the* Church as a great Divine-human Unity. There is "*one* Body," says Paul, and "*one* Spirit," animating each member of that one Body (Eph. iv. 4). Yet, owing to inevitable individual differences, this unity was apt to be broken. The members are therefore exhorted "to give diligence (earnestly striving) to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." All had been "called" in one common hope—that of salvation, or of eternal life through Christ; there was but "one Lord," whom all acknowledged, "one Faith," of

which Christ was the sole centre, "one Baptism," in which all professed their dedication to the one Lord and were represented as having died and risen again with Him, "one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all." Therefore, the Church should be *one*. No detailed doctrines are stated as the basis of unity, only the broad universalities which were implied in their being Christians. And, although there must be unity, there should be no dull uniformity in the Church: "But unto each one of us was given the grace"—the individual gift that constituted specific capacity for effective membership in the one Body—"according to the measure of the gift of Christ" (Eph. iv. 7). It was for each one to freely develop and exercise his special gift as a member of the Body, and so serve Christ. The unity was not one of doctrines or of humanly created organisation and authority; nor was it external *uniformity*, but internal *unity of the Spirit*.

We have no hint in these Epistles of the later Church organisation, such as appears in Ignatius and proceeded in its development until the Church had a human Head as well as the one Divine-human Head, relation to whom alone could make the Church that Body of *Christ* it was meant to be. On the contrary, there is no reason to believe that there was any actual organisation of "the Church" in the Apostles' time. Individual churches, meeting

in various places, were no doubt more or less organised, but not the Church as a whole. As Lightfoot points out, the enumeration of special office-holders in Ephesians iv. and Corinthians xii. are different, and neither is to be taken as inclusive or fixed. Westcott says: "In the first age it is perfectly clear from the Pauline Epistles that the Christian society was not as yet under any rigid organisation; there was not as yet a recognised ecclesiastical hierarchy," and "there is no provision for all time,—the vision was closed by the 'Coming.'"

No humanly organised church, nor any number of such churches, can form the complete Body of Christ, which in the very nature of it must embrace all who are vitally united to Christ, whether they are acknowledged by man or not. As already said, *ideally* the Church embraces humanity. No humanly organised body can ever be commensurate with it. At the same time, the divisions and separations that have grown up among Christians ought to be transcended by *the unity of the Spirit.* The *unity* is not ideal only, but meant to be very real and influential. But it is an inner, spiritual unity, not an outward *union* or uniformity. A union of churches will be good if Christ can be more efficiently served thereby, and if this be its motive. But such a union is never likely to be inclusive of all the Christians in a country; it depends on its *basis.* Whether it would be

good (judging from past experience) depends entirely on how far the Spirit of Christ would animate it. Christian *unity*—the unity of the Spirit—is quite a different matter. It is the solemn duty of all Christians to "strive earnestly" after this and to seek to maintain it. Whatever stands out against it is opposed to the very idea of the Church as the Body of Christ. A divided body is a very imperfect conception; it cannot serve Christ as a united body could. There is nothing that need hinder this *unity*, however great the diversity of creeds and church organisations, and the want of it must be a hindrance to the cause of Christ in the world; it is, in fact, unnatural and altogether unchristian. This *unity* of the Spirit, not uniformity, is, we repeat, the ideal of the Church. To quote Bishop Westcott once more: "Unity, not uniformity. Differences of race, class, social order, obviously have no influence upon it. They are of earth only. But, more than this, they are consistent with serious differences in the apprehension of the common faith in which it reposes. The unity of the whole is consistent with a wide variety of parts, each having to a certain degree a corresponding unity in itself. And the essential bond of union is not external but spiritual; it consists, not in one organisation, but in a common principle of life—external, visible unity is not required for the essential unity of the Church." But, he adds, "the

range of variation in the constitution of Christian societies must be limited by their fitness to embody the fundamental ideas of Christianity" (Ephesians).

The unity of the Spirit means very much more than a union of Churches, or even a formal union of all Christians. There is something prior to this, which has been too greatly lost sight of by Churches in general. As members of the Body of Christ we are, as we read in Ephesians iv. 25, "*members one of another.*" As those in whom the Spirit of God and of Christ dwells, we are bound together by the highest and holiest ties of a love which should be stronger than those of blood. In the words of St. Paul elsewhere, we are "one body in Christ and severally members one of another" (Rom. xii. 5), and "there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffereth, all the members suffer with it; or one member is honoured, all the members rejoice with it" (1 Cor. xii. 25–27). We give formal recognition to this unity of believing souls, and in our hymns we celebrate it; but it is very imperfectly carried out in practice. There is not much of this actual mutual "brotherly love," with the interest, care, and helpfulness that would flow from it, manifest in the greater number of Churches. The members are more often perfect strangers to each other (with certain exceptions, of course), and the mutual aid

which ought to characterise Christians and which did make the Early Church remarkable in the eyes of those around, has been, in one form of it at least, largely delegated to the rate-payers or the State. The Church has thus in great part divested herself of that robe of Love which was her most distinctive Divine livery and adornment. It may be said that under present social conditions it cannot be otherwise; but that is open to question. But even were it so, the *Spirit* of this mutual love ought to show itself in ways that it does not. The Church is too often found to be quite as cold as the world. It may be said that where the members of churches are separated from each other by so many barriers, social and other, it is impossible to realise the Christian Ideal. But this is a reflection on Christianity. The very purpose of the Spirit of Christ is to break down all the barriers that separate man from man, and to unite all in one common spirit of mutual love and care. Certainly, the Ideal cannot be realised without taking thought and trouble, and, it may be, making sacrifices. But these things belong to the very essence of our religion: without them nothing of real worth can be done. If these are withheld, the Church can never become the Body which Christ seeks to represent Him in the world. Well might an Apostle write, "Let brotherly love continue."

Love is everything in Christianity—not the love of God or of Christ merely, but of one another; not a love in word only, but in actual deed. "What profits it?" asks St. James, "if I say to my brother or sister in need of clothing or food, Go in peace; be thou warmed or fed, and give them not the things needful for the body?" This is that faith (and profession) without corresponding works that is valueless before God. It is perhaps in the neglect of this practical Christian love that the churches have most conspicuously and most seriously failed to come up to the Divine Ideal, and have therefore failed adequately to represent Christianity to the world. Without "brotherly love" it is nothing. Ecclesiasticism is not necessarily Christianity. In their concern for right doctrine in relation to *God* they have overlooked too greatly the need for right practice in relation to man—something so simple and nigh. They have forgotten too much that God is *Love*, and have paid too little heed to the question of St. John: "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" and to the words of the Master, "This is My commandment, that ye love one another—as I have loved you. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." It was through the manifestation of Christian unity in this love that the world should believe. As a matter

of fact, it was this that so greatly impressed the non-Christian world. It is not too much to say that had this unity of Christians as the members of one Body been more effectually recognised and carried out in practice, many of the worst evils that afflict society would never have existed, and the Church would have presented to the world such a genuine *Christian* Socialism as should have compelled universal admiration, because the human spirit would have seen in it the manifested Ideal of our common humanity.

The Church in Relation to the World

While the Love that belongs to the Spirit of Christ is to find the first sphere of its manifestation within the Church, it is by no means meant to be confined therein, but to go forth towards all men in the Service of Christ. Here, indeed, we see the supreme importance of the Church as the Body of Christ. Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world; but He needs a Body wherein to be present and act in the external world, just as truly as our own spiritual personality requires a body for its manifestation and action. The spirit may be ever so full, but without a body it cannot express itself. A blind man may desire earnestly to see something, a dumb man to speak some helpful or warning word, a deaf man to

hear what might be helpful to him, a man without hands to do something that might minister to his wants or to the help of others, but it is impossible without the appropriate bodily organs. No matter how earnestly the spirit might yearn after such effects, they could not be accomplished. Therefore, if Christ is to be actively and efficiently present in the world, otherwise than by spiritual inspiration and grace; if He is to be the Enlightener of those who sit in darkness, the Helper of the poor and weak, the Divine Agent of righteousness, in a word, the actual Saviour of the world, He must have *a Body* by means of which He can manifest Himself and act. It is for want of an adequate Body that He is not more clearly seen, and that He cannot do more for the good of men. The Church has thus, as the Body of Christ, a great and necessary *missionary function* to fulfil for the enlightenment and spiritual salvation of men. Only through its presentation of itself to Christ for that end can the work be done. We pray to God for the conversion of the world; but it is assuredly not His will that men should remain in ignorance or in sin. It is a *Body* with its members that He needs, through which His Spirit may operate as it yearns to do.

But more; the Spirit that dwells in the Church is that of true human life in *all its aspects*. It is the Spirit of Him who is the true Head of our humanity.

Men are truly "saved" just as they are made members of that Body of Christ. It is as they become vitally related to Him that they belong to that true humanity which is represented in Him and which derives from Him its life. Only as He is acknowledged does humanity find its Head. Apart from Christ, it is a body without a Head—an unnatural thing, or belonging to the lower organisms only. Hence the anarchy and confusion which reign in the world, which can only be removed when *the Head* is acknowledged and obeyed. In this way only can full *social* salvation be found. If in the natural body the members were to refuse or to fail to follow the guidance of the head, acting under no common principle, but each for itself—eyes and ears, hands and feet, acting independently, or for themselves merely, what a strange, impossible life it would be! Humanity is *ideally* an organic unity, not a mere collection of individuals, each acting under his own impulses or from some lower principle than that of the service of the true life of all. Humanity needs a Head as truly as any organism. And just as Nature laboured towards the production of a *head*, in which creatures could store up and learn from their experience, and as the head developed, life rose in quality, till at length man appeared as the Head of the world of Nature; so, man having been reached, God worked on till

in Christ the Head of humanity appeared—man realising and manifesting the true life before God. *Ideally*, the Church is humanity organised under its true Head; one Body in which we are members of Christ and of one another; one Body, all the members of which are animated by the Spirit of Christ, which is that of the *Love* that God is. It is only when this Spirit possesses all that humanity will be, indeed, the family of Him who is the Father of all, and that God Himself shall be "all in all."

The Church has thus a distinctly *social* mission. Not as separate from her spiritual calling, still less as conflicting with it, but as necessarily flowing out of it; and the too general neglect of this has alienated many from her. As we have seen, the Cross was designed to make peace between man and man, as well as between man and God. The Spirit of Christ, which is the life of the Church and seeks expression through her, is the Spirit of real, practical Love, of sympathy, kindliness, brotherliness, helpfulness, justice, unselfishness. It cannot suffer those in whom it dwells to be content, with the belief that they are right themselves for time or for eternity. As St. Paul says in another Epistle, "Look not every man to his own things, but every man to the things of others." The "things above" on which our affections are to be set are not things that have no practical relation to the present life of men and

women in the world, but the things of *God*—of justice and equity, of the Ideal Humanity which He "with whom there is no respect of persons" seeks to see realised on the earth. As already said, the Spirit that animates the Church is the only Spirit that can truly unite and socialise mankind; but in order to do this it must find expression through the Church in every way that is possible. It is the greatest reproach to the Church that she should be content in the presence of poverty and misery and unjust—often impossible—conditions of human life, issuing in demoralisation and degradation—in more than one form of "White Slavery," and in a life that is worse than death. The culpable existence of these conditions is as truly sinful—as contrary to the thought of God for man—as any sins which the Church condemns. The service of God is to be sought and found in the service of man.

The Christian Churches of to-day need to come back with deeper conviction to this conception of the Church as the Body of Christ, the Body which the spiritual Christ *needs* and yearns for, and died to gain. Before His death He felt Himself limited and restrained. As He said: "I have a Baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." For a time after His departure He found the Body He sought freely forming itself

around Him and becoming an efficient organ of His Spirit. We know how soon, alas! the spiritual conception of the Church was lost, and how an outward uniformity under humanly constituted authority became substituted for the Church of the Spirit.

Even now the high conception of the Church in these Epistles is but half-heartedly embraced by many Churches and Christians. The naturalness, necessity, and requirements of the idea are not realised. Churches too frequently appear to be institutions with interests of their own to advance. They are too often largely ends to themselves, while the great end for which the Church was called into being is comparatively little thought of. If they are enabled to exist and to pursue the even tenor of their way they are content, while the masses around are visibly drifting away from all religion, and, it may be, at their very doors, as in our great cities, there is an amount of squalor and vice—sometimes unnatural and revolting vice—which cannot be surpassed, if it can be equalled, among savages. Surely Christ seeks to do something more than He is enabled to do through such instruments. Church members too often fail to regard themselves as being primarily members of *Christ* in the literal sense of these Epistles. Membership in a particular church takes the place of

membership in *the* Church, which is the Body of Christ, and the interests of that particular Church are pursued irrespective of those of the Church as a whole. The obligation resting on each member, not only to *do*, but to *be* something for Christ, to be as far as possible His organ and representative in the world, is not universally felt or taken up in earnest. It is not an externally imposed duty, but that which follows naturally from membership in Christ's Body, and apart from which such membership would be as contradictory as if the members of the natural body should do nothing in the service of the animating spirit of life. What we term "Church services" are a very inadequate substitute for the real service of Christ. The idea of *worship* has become too largely restricted to that offered in "temples made with hands" on certain days, and "religious service" to the acts and observances on such occasions. We are still observing "days" instead of consecrating every day to the worship and service of the ever-present Lord in these "temples" which He seeks to find in ourselves. More emphasis needs to be placed on the idea of "the Church" in its original spiritual sense of the actual Body of Christ in the world.

Not only is this idea of the Church largely lost sight of, but Churches, and even "the Church," as far as it is thought of, are too often regarded as self-

enclosed institutions, separate from the world, instead of having it as their mission to influence and embrace human life in all its aspects and activities, so that *all* that a man does he does "as unto the Lord." Christianity has come to be regarded too much as a particular thing belonging to churches, instead of a universal Spirit which seeks to animate and direct all human action—*that* by means of which the world should be redeemed, uplifted, sanctified, and blessed in all its relationships, as God seeks to bless it, and men united in the one true life as a real family of God. Since Christ is wholly human as well as Divine, there can be *nothing* really belonging to our humanity that is outwith the range of His Spirit. Whatever there is that cannot be inspired and guided thereby is wrong and injurious to the common life in its truth. If Christ is the true man, we only become true men—whatever our special gifts or calling may be—as we suffer His Spirit to inspire and guide us, and live and work for the good of all.

The Christ-life, which should fill the Church and permeate society, is not a life in separation from the ordinary life of men and women in the world. It is that same life under its highest inspiration, in its truest form, directed to its supreme end—a *higher* life certainly than the ordinary life of the world; but not a *different* life. It is human life lifted to its highest term, with all that is unworthy of Christ

left behind. It is the life of Christ Himself—the life of God in Him—diffusing itself in the world, according to the Eternal Purpose and Divine Ideal of the Creation. Christ did not stand aloof from aught that was truly human, natural, and right for men. He was at the opposite pole from the separatist Pharisee, and so far from asceticism that His enemies spoke of Him as "a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners."

Because the Christian Church has come to be regarded so much as a *separate* thing, it has ceased to have that influence in the world that the "Body of Christ" and the "Habitation of God in the Spirit" ought to possess, and did possess as long as it "held fast the Head" and looked on itself as being in very truth the Body in which Christ was present and through which He was acting—extending the Divine Life more and more widely, permeating all human activities, inspiring men with one common Spirit of Life, even that which had been manifested in Himself as the true life of man, and was still present and operating in the world through the members of His Body. When we think of the material that formed that Body of Christ in these early days—men and women, in many cases lifted out of the depths of pagan ignorance and vice, who were yet so efficient in His service, what might He not find in ourselves to-day?

There are many "Churches" but only *one* "Church." Compliance with various requirements may make men members of these "Churches"; but only *one* thing can make any one a member of *the* Church of Christ—opening our hearts to Him that His Spirit may inspire our life, and we be actual members of a Body of which He is the Head. No earthly authority or power can confer this membership, and none can take it from us. "Joining the Church," or "becoming members," ought to mean our open profession of such membership *to Christ* and our uniting with other fellow-members for our edification in the spiritual life, for mutual helpfulness and for the more efficient service of the common Lord. Much Christian service is being rendered outside the churches, although not irrespective of the influences that have been sent forth through them; but if churches would take up more intelligently and earnestly the true conception of the Church, they would be saved from the reproach of standing aloof while others are doing the work they ought to do.

Only as we hold ourselves in vital relation to Him who is our Head, and draw from Him our inspiration and strength, does our life become of real value to Christ, or of the highest value to ourselves or to the world. The religion that the instincts of men are calling for to-day is an all-embracing

one; Divine, indeed, it must be, above the lower "natural life," yet genuinely *human* and natural in the higher sense; deriving its inspiration from Christ, and fixing its mind on the things above," yet looking also to the temporal interests of men as God's children, and covering the whole of human life and activity. It is really such a religion that seeks to possess and extend itself through the Church as "the Body of Christ."

The feeling that Christians ought to be visibly united is also growing in strength, and if there be first the unity of the Spirit, that unity will make itself manifest in some effective form, although the idea of an all-inclusive, visible, corporate body of Christians may never become actual in this world.

But we would repeat, what men justly look for, and what Christ Himself expects on the part of the Church, is the more general and effectual *practice of the Christian life.* When Jesus spoke of His disciples as a community, it was as the salt of the earth and the light of the world. They were to be like a city set on a hill which cannot be hid, like the lamp that was placed on the lampstand to give light to all that are in the house. "Even so," He said, "let your light shine before men; that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father who is in heaven." It was their good *deeds* that should show the presence of *God* in their midst

and give the world to know and love God. True doctrine, faithful preaching, church organisations and unions, are all good and necessary, but these alone will not move the world. They may satisfy those within; but they will not convince or attract the thousands outside. As with the Lord Himself, and as He foresaw, it is the good life and good deeds that will adequately impress men and gain them for God. It is more and truer Christian living and acting on the part of *all*—high and low, rich and poor, clergy and laity, ministers and people, that the Church must set herself to promote if she would be really the Body of the Spirit of Christ and of God in the world and win the world for God.

CHAPTER XI

THE HOPE OF GLORY

THE Divinely intended destiny of man as revealed in Christ is described as "Glory." It is something to be experienced beyond this present life and order of things, and implies survival of bodily dissolution—belief in which was, as already said, held by the majority of those to whom the Christian message came. It belonged to the Jewish faith, and was not only a floating popular belief among the Greeks, but formed a serious element in "the Mysteries." Christian believers, indeed, looked also for a *resurrection*, not in the body that was buried, but in a new spiritual body—one, the principle of which should be the *Spirit* instead of the natural *anima*, or soul. As St. Paul expressed it in 1 Corinthians xv. 44–46: "if there is a natural (psychical) body, there is also a spiritual (pneumatical) body—Howbeit that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; then that which is spiritual." It was at the coming of the Lord in His manifested glory that those who were dead should be raised and share in

His glory: "when Christ who is our life shall be manifested, then shall ye also with Him be manifested in glory" (Col. iii. 4; cf. Philip. iii. 20, 21). According to the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus Himself had promised His disciples participation in His glory as the Messiah—King and Judge (Matt. xix. 28; Luke xxii. 30; cf. 2 Tim. ii. 12: "We shall reign with Him"), and in the Fourth Gospel He says, "the glory which thou hast given Me I have given unto them," and prays that "they may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which thou hast given Me" (xvii. 22, 24)—where, however, there is no mention of a resurrection or of a reign on the earth.

The general belief of the Church has been that full entrance into this "glory" can only be ours in virtue of "the resurrection at the last day," which, however, cannot be of bodies, and implies the survival of the soul or personality. Since for the first Christians the entrance into glory with Christ meant the inheritance of the promised "Kingdom" (Eph. v. 5), and since this Kingdom was to be established on a transfigured earth, a bodily resurrection in a corresponding form was a necessity for its entrance and enjoyment. Such resurrection and life on a spiritualised earth, or in a transfigured world, may be a *possible* conception, but it cannot be denied that it does not readily commend itself to our minds to-day as the realisation of man's destiny, and it is not thus that Christians

in general think of it. It may be simply a remnant of earlier beliefs still clinging to the minds of the first Christians. What we seem to see in these Epistles, as well as in other writings of St. Paul, is the *gradual transcendence* of these more external beliefs by such spiritual conceptions as are most fully expressed in the Fourth Gospel.[1]

In Colossians (i. 12) the "inheritance," which is the same thing as "the Kingdom," is described as that of "the saints in light." That this "light" has primarily a *moral* significance appears from the contrast with the "darkness" from which they had been "delivered" and "translated into the Kingdom of the Son of His Love." The Kingdom is thus already existent, and is spiritually conceived. We have also the "light" in an ethical sense in Ephesians v. 8: "ye were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord: walk as children of Light" (cf. vi. 12), and in 2 Corinthians v., while Paul still desires "not to be unclothed, but clothed upon," it is "with a house which

[1] A modern thinker like Renan, however, could ask, "Who knows if the highest term of progress after millions of ages may not evoke the absolute consciousness of the universe, and in this consciousness the awakening of all that have lived. A sleep of a million years is not longer than a sleep of an hour" (*Vie de Jesus*, chap. v. See also his *Philosophical Dialogues and Fragments* (Trübner & Co.), quoted in the present writer's *Christian Theism* and a *Spiritual Monism*). While the "silence of the grave" suggests, the solidarity of mankind gives colour to such speculations.

is *from heaven*," and he is willing to be absent from the body and at home with the Lord (cf. Phil. i. 23, "to depart and be with Christ, which is very far better"), which shows his strong conviction of the reality of life with Christ in the unseen spiritual world. In these Epistles there is no mention of a resurrection of Christians, and, as we have seen, *the Church* is affirmed to be the Body of Christ in this world, by means of which the glory of God in His grace should be manifested.

But many have at present grave doubts concerning not merely the possibility of "resurrection," but the possibility or probability of our survival of bodily dissolution. If, however, we view the question from the point of view afforded by these Epistles, a new light falls upon it. If all were created *in Christ*—if the eternal purpose for man is to be conformed to God's Son—human life must have been Divinely conceived, not merely as temporal, but as eternal. For that Ideal cannot be realised in time alone. Hence the universal instinct of survival is justified. And there is nothing that science shows us contradictory of this. However close we may deem the union of soul and body—even though we conceive of them as two sides of a constant *unity*—we must believe in a very real *distinction* between them. The spiritual Personality which we know ourselves to be belongs to quite another order than the body, and cannot

share its fate. It, with the memories, knowledge, and capacities which belong to it, is *spiritual*, and cannot be identified with the bodily organism which serves it, but must *in some form* survive the dissolution of that organism. Nor is consciousness in time and space—that which we have through the senses—commensurate with the Personality. There has been all along an effective Reality quite distinct from and prior to that consciousness—a spiritual Reality which comes to *have* that consciousness—something belonging to another world altogether than the material, something which formed the organism all unconsciously to the man when in his mother's womb, which has gone on, still unconsciously or subconsciously to him, building up his brain according to his exercises and experiences, and is thus shown to be inseparable from that Personality which he is, which may be sometimes conscious and sometimes unconscious in the outer world, or as respects the consciousness derived therefrom. It does not follow, therefore, that because consciousness in the external world ceases at death, the Personality which that consciousness has served perishes, or that it may not regain consciousness in another sphere by other means. There may be, indeed, a higher and wider consciousness to which, even now, the Personality belongs, but from complete or continuous participation in which it is shut off by the bodily organism.

Psychology is coming to recognise the soul as being, not only as real as the body, but as being that which is deepest and formative in bodily evolution. "The mind," says McDougall, "has been the pioneer of bodily evolution; the bodily organs and functions have been merely the instruments through which the mind has accomplished its purposes," and hence "we see how distorted is any view of the evolutionary process which represents mind as a mere bye-product of its later stages, first coming into being when the physical processes within the nervous systems of animals reached a certain degree of complexity. Yet that is a view of mental evolution which has been widely entertained" (*Psychology*, pp. 176, 177). What is true of the evolutionary process as a whole is true of each particular organism: there is something in every case that is not material, and this shows itself as Personality in man.

There is much in recent psychology, with the prominence now given to the sub-conscious, to support the opinion advanced by I. A. Fichte, that the soul does not only form the body but has a life of its own, which only makes itself manifest in our consciousness in dreaming and in various exceptional and abnormal conditions—"a life full of hidden relations," with signs that betray themselves, such as can only be described by "the working of a higher consciousness upon our own"—and that it may be

gradually making itself independent of its bodily organ, raising itself above the necessity of it; thus preparing for itself a higher condition or mode of existence (see his *Contributions to Mental Philosophy*, translated by J. D. Morell). Much more might be said in the light of recent psychology and philosophy; but, at anyrate, we are certain that the Personality belongs to a realm quite different from the material, one which is not only as real as the outer world, but the most real and the most certainly known to us. *In* that spiritual realm the personal life has been lived, and in it it endures.

Still, after all our reasonings, we must have *Faith* —faith in the rationality of the universe, in the conservation of values, in the supremacy of justice and goodness, in a Divine purpose in life. The Christian assurance rests on the revelation of the true life of man in Christ, and on His transcendence of death and of temporal conditions—on His continued Presence with us. Apart from Christ we seem to ask in vain for any certain knowledge of what becomes of this spiritual Personality, this spiritual side of our being, this *soul* which we are. We cannot picture to ourselves its existence in the absence of a material embodiment, and "the spiritual body" which some believe in is still really material. Although psychical research has done much to render a future life probable, if not certain, as some

hold, it cannot as yet give us any clear conception of the *mode* of existence in the unseen world. It is altogether probable that that world is not meant to be open to us like the present; for, if it were so, the highest moral qualities of men in this life would be rendered much less possible of acquirement, if, indeed, life itself, as it is meant to be, would be possible.

But if we take Christ as these Epistles present Him to us—as *the true man*, representing us in His life and death and life beyond death, some light may come to us. His survival proves the reality of personal life after bodily death, and creates a presumption at least in favour of that of other personalities; it gives an assurance of the survival of all who are animated by the same *Spirit*. In His "resurrection" and "ascension"—however we may understand these terms—He was still *man*, and the representative of man. Where did He go? He did not go anywhere in the sense of local movement. He went to God, who is everywhere, with whom He was already *one*. In His spiritual Personality He already belonged to a different realm than that of space, and when the flesh was dropped He found His full life therein. He went, we are assured, *to God*—not to be absorbed in the Deity in a pantheistic sense, but to live as an active Personality in the Divine Life—carrying our humanity into the Deity. "Our life," says the Apostle, "is hid with Christ in God."

To go to God, to live thus in God, was to enter into "glory"; for "glory" is that which is distinctive of the Divine Life. And if Christ's life is representative of ours, then, when those in whom He lives die, they too go to God, "to be with Christ" in God. For them, too, this is to enter into "glory" as far as they are capable of entering that Divine Life which Christ entered in its fulness. They have already been made alive with Christ—alive with a life which is the very life of God in them, a life which bodily dissolution cannot destroy, but only liberate, as Christ's laying aside the body was the liberation of His Spiritual Personality. They are vitally united to Christ as the members of a Body of which He is the Head, and where the Head is, the members must also be. Christ is *in* them, and in "the One Spirit" God is in them, and death cannot separate them from God. Hence the indwelling Divine Spirit was felt to be "the earnest of the inheritance"—the "arles"—a first instalment of that which is yet to be received in full: thereby they were "*sealed* unto the day of redemption" (Eph. i. 13, 14, iv. 30). There can be no doubt, therefore, with respect to those who are united to Christ—those in whom His Spirit is the principle of the life. When "the veil of flesh" is dropped they find themselves with Christ in God. As He says in the Fourth Gospel, "where I am there shall ye be also"; "where I am there shall also My servant be";

"Father, I desire that they also whom thou hast given Me be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory, which thou hast given Me; for thou lovedest Me before the foundation of the world."

If we inquire farther respecting that life in God, may we not learn something more from Christ as our type? We wonder with respect to those who leave us; we ask why does no one ever return? But are we quite sure that they do not? or, rather, do they really *depart* in the sense of removing to a distance? They certainly leave the outward world of space, but there is an inner spiritual world to which they belonged in their personalities—an inner world of the Spirit to which we belong also, although the veil of the flesh still separates us from it. Perhaps it is only *this* that hides them from us. Yet there may be openings in that veil, and spiritual communion is always possible. They are "with Christ in God," we say. But all our prayers, all our worship, all our inner spiritual experience rest on the belief that God and Christ are very near us, with us and even within us. We cannot *see* or *touch* our departed friends; but no more can we see or feel the presence of God or of Christ (and it is because of this that we sometimes doubt the reality of their presence); yet, owing to the relation in which Christ stands to us as "our Life," our Lord and Saviour, Friend and Helper, we

can know His presence to be as real as that of God. If those who have passed from our vision are *with Christ*, are they not also near to us in spiritual presence, as He is? Our mistake is desiring to *see* what in its nature as spirit cannot be seen by normal sight.

Further, the Spiritual Personality of Christ is represented as seeking embodiment in those who receive Him as the inspiring and illuminating Spirit of their life. It is doubtless from a necessity arising from the ethical nature of His Personality that He seeks such embodiment in other lives; it is, as we have seen, as the Saviour of men, for the sake of the work that He desires to do in the world, that He seeks embodiment in the Church designed to be His "fulness." Because in Him the perfect life of man was realised, He, as the one completely Divine and human Person in whom "all the Fulness dwells," can come to us with a power which none other possesses, and it is therefore to Him that our attention is to be supremely directed and our hearts opened, not to other invisible powers, real or imaginary, nor to other disembodied spirits, however dear they may be to us. Only to Him who is the Truth of our life, and in whom dwells "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," are we meant to go in all that affects our spiritual life and work. It is for this reason, perhaps, that communion with other lesser personalities is so

largely shut up from us. Christ, moreover, is the Head of all spiritual powers, wherever they are.

But if Christ thus seeks embodiment in us, may not all surviving personalities seek similar embodiment, and may they not find it in greater or less measure in souls that are susceptible to their influences and receptive of them? While Christ is the Head of all, may there not be, not only spiritual beings "in the heavenlies" who are in sympathy with the Divine purpose and actings, rejoicing to behold them, to whom, as St. Paul says, are made manifest the riches of God's glory in Christ; but also spiritual personalities—"spirits of just men made perfect"—who have been on earth the members of Christ's Body, and who now, in subordination to the Head, go forth to influence and it may be, under Christ, to guide and direct, to cheer, comfort, and help those still on earth, finding, so far, embodiment in them. Christ, we must believe, has many ministries in the fulfilment of which those who have departed the flesh may find employment. Such active service is implied, indeed, in entrance into the "glory" that is God's, and we shall see in the following chapter how many forms of such service are open to them, engaging in which they, in the highest sense, partake of "the glory of God."

In this thought also the younger Fichte (from whose interesting "Confession" we have already

quoted) found the explanation of that individual or particular *Providence* which we are naturally inclined to believe in, and which necessarily underlies the belief in a general Providence. Of such a particular Providence and Divine regard for individuals Christ was the supreme manifestation, and its action is found, so far, in the fact of His continued Presence. But something more is needed to complete the conception, and this is found in the thought of "intermediate orders of the spirit world." "Why should not the inward mental influences which impel to these results [in the individual life] be communicated by intermediate orders of the spirit world? Why should not this all-present guidance of human destiny be entrusted to the care of more advanced and perfected minds?" Science, indeed, cannot give any certain answer; it must be left to personal faith. But "there can be hardly a more natural and obvious explanation; and, what is still more, there is no arrangement more consonant with the purposes of Divine Love, which we see everywhere, than that which binds together humanity in both worlds by indissoluble ties, and brings the Divine protection and blessing to us through human instrumentality." Of course, there are limits to the action of this Providence, and its guidance may not be always followed by us.

There may also be—we may remark in passing—

spiritual Personalities who operate as evil influences, such as St. Paul speaks of in these Epistles when he says, "our warfare is not with flesh and blood only." Space does not apply to the spiritual world, which may be full of Personalities both good and bad. Experience seems to support this belief; for there are evil influences especially,—suggestions, temptations, buffetings, which do not come from ourselves nor from embodied persons. Nor are they wholly from that "wider self" which is represented by the "sub-conscious." At the same time, there are good and holy influences, inspirations, consolations, which may not always emanate directly from Christ. But the evil powers can make their influences more consciously felt in good souls, because such influences are contrary to that which such souls would fain cherish and become; whereas the influences proceeding from the good are more in harmony with the desires of the good, and are therefore less distinguishable.

If we inquire further concerning the *mode* of this existence with Christ in God,—while we who are accustomed to think in terms of space cannot expect to understand the things of the spiritual world,—we may still learn something more from the contemplation of Christ as our type. So far as we *know*, those who pass into that life do so as disembodied spirits (although there *may* be an em-

bodiment invisible to us), and if we are to think of them as *near* us we cannot suppose them to be permanently embodied. How, then, we naturally ask, are they distinguished from each other? how can there be communication? how shall we "know each other there"? The answer may be found if we think of spiritual *form* as being as real as bodily form. When Christ is said to be "the image of the invisible God," we are not to think of an outward appearance; yet it denotes something *real*. St. Paul elsewhere speaks of Christ as pre-existing "in the form (μορφή) of God," which certainly does not mean a bodily form or shape; and of His "becoming in the form of a servant (or slave)," which again has no reference to anything material. As more than one philosopher has taught, there is an immaterial *form* of beings as well as an outward or material figure—that of which the material figure is the expression; "for soul is form and doth the body make." We take up personally this formative power, so far as concerns our personal life, and even (as we have seen) to no small extent as affects the bodily organism. We are constantly building up our spiritual form, this expression of our real selves in the spiritual world. How often, even in this earthly life, do we witness the character of the Personality finding striking material expression in the countenance, so that we seem at once to know

the person. That which we thus witness is the manifestation of a spiritual reality, which as such belongs to, and after death finds itself in, the spiritual realm. We think of the person whom we knew and loved as something quite real and distinct from the body that is laid in the grave. Each person possesses an individual form of his own. This view of the reality and permanence (although not necessarily unchangeableness) of spiritual form may enable us, without any materialistic assumptions, to say"—

> "Eternal form shall still divide
> The eternal soul from all beside;
> And I shall know him when we meet."

What other means of expression there may be we cannot tell. But if the resurrection narratives have a foundation of fact, Christ was able to manifest Himself to His disciples, also to St. Paul on more than one occasion, although there may have been no "appearance" outside the Personality —only what was projected from within. At the same time, for aught we know to the contrary, while there may be no permanent embodiment, manifestation and communication by means of finer material than we are acquainted with may be possible, and may have been made. But the facts of telepathy seem to render it probable that there may be immediate communication of mind with mind even

in earthly embodiment, without any material medium (see "Telepathy and Metaphysics," by the Right Hon. G. W. Balfour in *Hibbert Journal* for April 1913). This is also what we assume to be possible as the basis of our religious experience—our communion with God and with Christ.

The Word "Glory"

A consideration of what is implied in the word "glory" may help us to understand what the Hope of Glory means for the Christian.

The word—*doxa*—occurs very often in the New Testament. Derived from *dokeō*, to "seem" and to "think," it meant originally both *appearance* and *opinion*, coming to stand for bright appearance, and good or favourable opinion, approval, praise, honour, etc. When St. Paul says, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God," and again, "Being justified by faith we rejoice in hope of the glory of God," the reference seems to be to the Divine *approbation*, with, of course, all that this includes. This meaning seems also to underlie the saying in the Fourth Gospel: "they loved the glory (that is) of men more than the glory (that is) of God"—their approbation (xii. 43).

Regarded in this light, "the hope of the glory of God" would mean primarily, the hope of ultimate

Divine approbation. Strictly speaking, this is the *only* hope of man, and Jesus as our Representative has entered into its complete fulfilment. Whatever *more* than this "glory" may mean for man, this must be the condition of participation in it. And since no man can imagine that as he is in himself, or in virtue of anything he can work in himself, he can claim that approbation of God which can only be given to that which is "without blame" before him, it is "*Christ* in us" that is our "hope of glory."

But the word in the New Testament most frequently represents the Hebrew terms so largely employed in the Old Testament to denote the honour, majesty, splendour, and excellence of God as the Divine Being—that which is distinctive of the Divine—as well as honour, splendour, etc., pertaining to man and created things. "The glory of God," says Westcott, "is the full manifestation of His attributes according to man's power of apprehending them, 'all His goodness' (Ex. xxxiii. 19)." In the Synoptic Gospels it frequently represents the glory of the Messiah—"when He comes in His glory," "in the glory of His Father," etc. The entrance of Christ into this glory is His "glorification" after death. This glory is regarded as something that can be manifested in brightness, or "light": "the glory of the Lord" shone around

the shepherds, the glory of Christ shone forth in His transfiguration, and appeared to Paul on his way to Damascus; our bodies are to be "conformed to the body of His glory": so in Colossians it is said, "when He shall be manifested, we also shall be manifested with Him in glory."

Here again, however, we have outward representations of that which in its principle or source is ethical and spiritual. It belongs to the *character* of God and of Christ. As we have seen, it is *the spirit* that is the norm of the spiritual body; the transfiguration of Christ proceeded from within, and it is essentially an inward spiritual transformation that is described in 2 Corinthians iii. 18: "We all with unveiled face, beholding (or reflecting) the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." It is also a "glory full of grace and truth" that is ascribed to Jesus as the only-begotten from the Father (John i. 14); and when Paul speaks of "the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ," and says: "God—shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," the reference can only be to a *moral* glory (cf. Art. "Glory" in Hastings' *Dict. of the Bible*).

Deepest of all, therefore, we must think of the "glory" in which we hope to share as the eternal inheritance of God's children—into the fulness of

which Jesus as the Head of humanity and "the first-born from the dead" has entered—as that fulness of ethical life which is the life of God. It is our entrance, according to the measure of our capacity, into the Divine Life.

This confirms for us the high truths suggested in the opening chapter of Colossians, that the motive of the creation was the communication of the Divine Life to others who should be sons to God. It is therefore that all things were created "in Christ" as *Son* of God. The purpose of the Perfect Love which sought thus to give itself could only be attained through such a Divine *kenōsis* as gives that appearance to the world, which, in some of its aspects, suggests the absence of God. In order to be the Creator, God must go out from Himself. Hence we witness in Nature that action of Intelligence apart from Morality which had such an influence on Hartmann as to make him affirm that the Creative Power was blind and creation a mistake. The destined result could only be reached by means of that gradual process which we call "evolution." But at the root of the whole process, and ever gradually coming into fuller manifestation, was the Divine thought and potency, the Divine thought and love—ripening into full fruition in the appearing and perfect Sonship and Sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Our bodies are necessary for our individuality and education, but when the Personality is perfected they are no more required, and there is the return of the creation into the bosom of God, as He from all eternity conceived it—which is what we see in Christ. Other personalities are perfected—each according to its measure—through union with Christ and by His spiritual indwelling and working. It is fundamentally a perfecting of the *spirit* and *life*, and Christ as the Head and Saviour of humanity has undertaken this for us all, and is able to present even those "who were in time past alienated and enemies in their mind in their evil works"—"holy and without blemish before Him," viz. God. The more complete we are, the greater will be the possibility of entering into the life of "glory," and therefore the Apostle laboured so earnestly that he might make every man "perfect in Christ Jesus." The ideal is complete conformity to Christ.

There is no other hope save that which is founded in the revelation of our true life in Christ and the Eternal Divine purpose that this implies; our hope is in our return to God as that which He meant us to become—His children possessed of His life. And if sharing in the Divine Life be the "glory" we are permitted to hope for, the eternal life must be one of love, of action, of self-giving, of sacrifice, returning to itself in the fruits thereof, and hence, at the same

time, the life of perfect blessedness, because it is a sharing in the life of God. Some possible aspects of that life of love and service, and hence of "glory," will appear in the course of our concluding chapter.

CHAPTER XII

THE WIDER REFERENCE: FULFILMENT OF THE "ETERNAL PURPOSE"

SO far we have seen the fulfilment of the eternal purpose in the bringing to God and glory of those who on earth receive Christ as their life and hold fast to Him as the Head of the Body of which they are the members. But we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that this alone would be a very imperfect fulfilment of the Divine purpose as it is stated in these Epistles, and as it must be regarded, if we are to think of it as meeting the requirements of the Divine creative and redemptive love. It is the return of *the whole creation* to God that is contemplated in the fulfilment of the Divine creative purpose. The purpose of God as stated in Ephesians i. 10 is "to sum up all things in Christ" ("that all things may be gathered together in Christ as in a centre," Weiss) and in Colossians i. 20, "to reconcile (or reconcile again) all things unto Himself, having made peace through the blood of His Cross, through Him, whether things on the earth or things in the

heavens." "All things" in both passages represents τὰ πάντα and cannot mean less than all things absolutely, the universe—"God purposed through Christ to reconcile the universe to Himself." In whatever way we may explain these passages, we cannot, as Alford remarks, stop short of that. Similarly, Lightfoot says: "The whole universe of things, material as well as spiritual, shall be restored to harmony with God." And Westcott remarks: "It is altogether arbitrary to introduce any limitation into the interpretation of τὰ πάντα. The truth transcends our comprehension, but we can see that it answers to the fact and purpose of creation (Apoc. iv. 11; Rom. xi. 30)." All modern commentators agree in this, whether they do full justice to the statement or not. We see, then, what we have before us plainly affirmed as belonging to the revelation in Christ.

Moreover, the conclusion is bound up with the very idea of the creation. For all things were created *in Christ,* and therefore the goal of the creation must be conformity *to* Christ. As Weiss says (although he stops short of the legitimate conclusion), "it cannot fail, because the goal of the world established in Him (Christ) must be realised" (*Bib. Theology of New Test.*, ii. 99).

It cannot be said that the purpose of God was fulfilled in what was *done* in Christ; because what

was done through His Cross was *with a view* to "the reconciliation of all things to Himself." What was done in Him was the basis on which the reconciliation rests; and whatever was done in Christ was done representatively for all, and must be actually realised in all.

If we were to stop short of this, the eternal purpose and its fulfilment would be very much less than that which they embrace. Those who are presently being attached to Christ and made heirs of glory constitute but a small fraction of the human race. What of those who lived and died before Christ appeared? What of the myriads who, since His appearance, have lived and died on earth, and have passed away from it, without ever having heard of Christ, and who are so passing away every day? What of the many who, having heard, have failed to embrace Him as their Head, and who die "unsaved"? We may ignore these questions if we choose, but ought we to do so? Others will not and cannot ignore them. Nor can we thus do justice to the Gospel, or present a true representation of God as the Creator of the world and the Father of men, as He has been revealed in Christ. The matter is, indeed, "vital to Christianity." It is vital to religion. Our thoughts concerning God, our feelings towards Him as Creator, our estimate of the redemption in Christ, are all bound up with the question of *the*

ultimate issue of the creation. We cannot rest contented with the thought that we ourselves shall be saved and perhaps our best-loved friends, or even a very much larger number, while others are hopelessly lost. The principle Divinely implanted in our hearts forbids it, and the very fact that it does so suggests an irrepressible hope, if not a certainty; for—

> "The wish that of the living whole
> No life may fail beyond the grave,
> Derives it not of what we have,
> The likest God within the soul?"

It is not too much to say that on the answer to these questions depends for serious thought the validity of the entire statement of the Divine eternal purpose in these Epistles. Whatever difficulties may confront us, and however much we may seem to meet with in the Scriptures to the contrary, we seem bound to believe—if we take in earnest the revelation said to have been given in Christ—that the working out of the eternal purpose of God, in view of which the world was created and redeemed, is not exhausted in this present life, but that the process of reconciliation must go on beyond it, and cannot cease till "all things" in the "heavenlies" (or the spiritual world), as well as on the earth, are brought back to God in Christ. And it is only this that gives us a full *human* Gospel—one wide as creation

—and brings to heart and mind a satisfying view of the creation itself, with the suffering, sin, and death that presently characterise it.

No doubt, when we think of the enormous multitudes that have peopled the earth, of the millions that are constantly passing into the unseen, and of the kind of life the great majority have lived and still live on earth, it all seems at times very bewildering, and our hopes appear to be founded on our wishes rather than on any solid basis. But, as already pointed out, we derive from the Christian conception of our life in these Epistles one most reassuring consideration: *human life has been conceived by God in the image of His own eternity*; the Ideal is one that *cannot* be fully realised on the earth; it is sonship to Himself after the image of Christ, not something temporal merely, but eternal. So that we can adopt for humanity at large what St. Paul says of the Christian hope: "He that wrought us for this very thing is God." The infinite is His realm and eternity His "work-day." Thus we come back with courage restored, believing that death does not bound the Divine intention; that there is an endless progression and boundless possibilities before us; that God is over all, and that His eternal purpose manifested in Christ cannot fail of accomplishment.

It is common to say that we have only to do with the Christian salvation in the present, with the case of those who believe in Christ, and that we must leave all that is beyond this in the hands of God. This assumes, of course, that we have no *revelation* of a wider purpose; but, even if we confine ourselves to this view of the case, we shall find that we are compelled to go beyond all that is accomplished in the present life.

The Divine purpose of salvation as it is stated in these Epistles (or as on any ground we can conceive it) must have embraced *at least* the human beings who were living at the time when redemption became effective through the Cross of Christ. It was God's purpose that these should be saved. But how many of those thus embraced in the Divine purpose would *of necessity* pass away before that purpose could be even made known to them! How many of those who were representatively reconciled to God in Christ would thus perish, if the possibility of salvation be limited to the present life! We cannot doubt that, if *any* were embraced in the Divine purpose, those then living were so; otherwise there would be no meaning in the reconciliation of *man* to God in Christ. But unless the Divine grace can operate in the world beyond, the Divine purpose with respect to them has failed; or rather, it had no meaning. It became effective

only in a very small moiety of those who were redeemed by Christ.

Christ died for *all* men: salvation was provided and represented for all in Him. But countless thousands have passed away without ever having heard of Christ. Why? Partly because, in the case of many, it was inevitable that they should do so, and partly because their fellow-men who did hear of Christ and of the salvation provided for all in Him failed to make the glad tidings known to others. Are all these others, therefore, eternally lost to God? Can the fulfilment of the Divine Father's purpose as it affects millions of His children have been left wholly dependent on the action of man towards his fellow-men and on the chances of life on earth? Does God think only of those who *happen* to hear the Gospel? How can we believe it?

If men can be fully saved—made partakers in "glory"—apart from the Gospel in Christ, why need it be sent to them? Christ, it may be said, stands for a principle: those who live by that principle are saved thereby. No doubt there are many belonging to all times—Old Testament saints and men and women of all nations, who, striving to be true to the light that was given them, were, as St. Paul puts it, "seeking glory, honour, and immortality," to whom should be granted "Eternal

Life." There may be of these a great multitude which no man can number, and amongst ourselves to-day there are many who do not profess Christianity who cannot be disposed of in the old hard-and-fast manner. But still we have thus only a relatively small portion of human beings, and for them, *perfecting* in the life beyond is necessary. Judged by the Christian standard, many of the Old Testament saints were far from perfect, and perhaps there are few Christians even who are fit for "glory" when they die. So that there must be the action of grace after death.

If we believe with Christ that there is a "soul" which the death of the body cannot touch, we must believe that all ethical personalities at least, or all who have souls, survive bodily dissolution; and if Christ is "Head over all things,"—the universe, seen and unseen,—if He is the Ideal in whom all have been created, and in whom they have been representatively reconciled to God; if He is to "fill all things," and God through Him to be "all in all"; if, in a word, He is really the Saviour of the *world*,—why should there be any hesitation in believing that He shall complete His work, that His spiritual saving power can and shall reach those who have passed into the unseen world as well as those who are here embodied on earth? Christ is more completely manifested *there* than He

is here, and, divested of the earthly body, *they* must be more open to spiritual influences. To believe otherwise is to limit Christ without any reason, and to contradict the assertion in these Epistles of His universal Headship, which are supported by statements attributed to Him in the Synoptic Gospels, already quoted, such as: "All things have been delivered unto Me of My Father," and "All authority hath been given unto Me in heaven and on earth." May not an element of that "glory" into which Christ has entered be that of the Eternal Redeemer carrying out to its completion the Divine purpose conceived in Himself? May not also much of the "glory" of those who pass into the Divine life "with Christ in God," and of their work for God under Christ, be the bringing of the many who have died without the knowledge of Christ to that knowledge and to God? The heavenly life cannot be an inactive one, and surely there is no kind of action more Christ-like or more "full of glory" than this. Christ taught distinctly that we are here in training for higher service; that to him who is faithful in this life higher things will be committed. Is not this missionary work in the Unseen that "higher service" which we are accustomed to say our Christian friends are raised to when they leave us, often without our having any very deep conviction of its reality, and,

at any rate, without any clear conception of its nature?

The only way by which the conclusion that the work of salvation must proceed after death can be avoided, and at the same time the fulfilment of a Divine purpose affirmed, would be by *limiting the purpose* to an elected number of the race, while all others are left to perish. But such limitation, we have seen, would be entirely unwarranted, when it is *the universe* that is spoken of. Besides, it is clear beyond all reasonable dispute that the *election* affirmed in these Epistles (as we have seen from Eph. iii. 4–6) is that of the Gentiles to be "fellow-heirs" with the Jewish race of the Kingdom of God, an *extension* of that Divine election which was supposed to have been confined to Israel, to *all mankind*, not a restriction of it to certain individuals. Indeed, it is just this that leads to the affirmation of the universal purpose. What kind of reconciliation of *the universe* to Himself would that be which was confined to an elected few? We are only warranted to affirm a Divine election unto salvation if we make it wide enough to embrace all mankind. What a thing it would be to limit the Divine purpose!

Therefore, for those who die without the knowledge of Christ, there must be the possibility of that knowledge in the life to come.

But what, it may be asked, of those who were not

sufficiently developed as to be able to receive the Christ? We can only believe that for all surviving personalities there will be possibilities of development beyond death; and here again, there may be a wide field for the services of those who are in "glory."

A still more serious question is, what of those who have *refused* Christ and die unsaved, or who may refuse Him in the life beyond? But must this refusal remain fixed for ever? By what right can this be affirmed? If the conversion of the *worst* is possible in this life, why should it become impossible in the life to come? We are not to argue here this oft-debated question. It may be correct to say that Paul had not this subject in his mind when writing these Epistles. We are not concerned with the question whether he had or not. We have a distinctly declared *purpose of God* to reconcile *all things* to Himself—the universe, which was *created in* Christ, having therefore its Ideal and its goal in Him; and which was representatively reconciled in "the blood of the Cross." We confine ourselves to this. We ask, can God's eternal creative and redemptive purpose fail? It may certainly be *resisted* by free personalities; but can it be resisted for ever? If we say that God's purpose can fail ultimately, is not this to make Him less than *God*? Is it not to say that He has created something that He cannot bring into harmony with

its Ideal, or back into unity with Himself, that there is something in the creation stronger than God? And when we remember that that something is supposed to be *evil*, we may well shudder at such a conclusion. Certainly, there can be no salvation by compulsion; but is there not sufficient spiritual power in God,—non-compulsory, yet moving and obtaining free consent,—"to subdue all things to Himself?" to *Himself*, be it noted, not in mere external submission, but to that which He is. The Divine Omnipotence is not that of *Force*, but that of *Love*—the Love that He *is*, as He has manifested Himself in Christ. May not that Love so come to every soul as shall yet bring every soul in humble, heartfelt submission into unity with the Father? If man has been created *in Christ* and *for* God, there must be something in every man's nature which will not suffer him to rest till the Ideal in which he was created is realised. Can all men really *know* "the breadth and length and height and depth of the love of Christ that passeth knowledge," without being at length conquered by it? "Stronger His love than earth or hell." As Luther explains it, "nothing is so broad, long, deep, high, as to be beyond the power and help of Christ" (quoted by Meyer). Surely this is true, and we see constant proofs of what the knowledge of God in Christ can work in the human heart. Let us worthily trust the Almighty Love of our Creator and Redeemer

It *is* able to reconcile completely all things to Himself.

The universality of the Divine *purpose* is, as we have said, generally recognised. But it would be no fulfilment of that purpose if a large portion of humanity were to remain in settled and hopeless opposition to God. Nor, if evil were to be put down by *force* merely, could "all things" (the universe) be said to be "reconciled to God." Dr. Meyer says: "All unchristian natures and persons shall be discarded out of heaven and earth, so that thereafter nothing in heaven or upon earth shall be excluded from the gathering together again." But "the gathering together again" is of "all things to Himself," not after some things have been excluded. No one, perhaps, has stated the eternal purpose better than Dr. Dale in his lectures on Ephesians. "Paul," he remarks, "has just said that it is the Divine purpose to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth. This is the destiny of the universe. Unmeasured ages of imperfection, sin, and suffering lie behind us, and it may be there are unmeasured ages of imperfection, sin, and suffering still to come. But at last the whole creation is to illustrate and fulfil the Divine thought, and to reach its perfect unity and ideal perfection in Christ." "The whole creation"; it is a grand, reassuring conception—one

without which we cannot surely be content. But how very incomplete it would be if the result was reached only after many had been annihilated, as Dr. Dale believed. Even this thought brought relief to his great heart and to many others from the dreadful incubus of everlasting misery; but the tendency of more recent theology is to take that more hopeful view which seems also to give the worthier thought of God, and to be alone consonant with His eternal purpose in creation and redemption.

But to say that God's purpose continues to take effect after death is not even remotely to suggest that all men will step into blessedness when they die, or that sin of any kind can escape its due punishment. This is impossible: "Whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap." In these Epistles entrance into glory, even for those who have been reconciled to God, is made dependent on their continuance in the faith, and it is solemnly affirmed that it is impossible for some to inherit the Kingdom of God. It is impossible for them *as they are*. As long as sinfulness continues, blessedness abides afar off, and only misery remains—misery, it may be, now realised for the first time by the callous heart and deadened conscience. While to some, freedom from the body may make it easier to respond to God, to others the knowledge that has come to

them of the consequences of sin may make it more difficult to come to Him from the right motive. There may be resistance to God, not only in this life, but in that which is to come, and how long it may continue no one can tell. As Dr. W. N. Clarke, who in his *Outlines of Christian Theology* favours the more hopeful view, remarks: "A hope of final restoration opens up no easy path. Nothing but just such humble and holy return to God as Christ now demands can ever, in any imaginable state or world, bring salvation. This breaking-off of sins by righteousness, and of iniquities by turning to the Lord, must naturally grow more difficult the longer one goes on in evil."

There is thus nothing in the acceptance of the belief in God's purpose to reconcile all things to Himself, to encourage men to continue in sin or to be indifferent to the salvation that is *now* brought nigh to them. On the contrary, there may be thus brought home to them such a *realisable* conception of the certain consequences of sin as to be a real deterrent from sinful courses and a reason for accepting Christ's salvation from sin and sinfulness. Nor is there anything that should make us less earnest and self-sacrificing in our endeavours to carry the Gospel to all and to press it upon them for their acceptance. Alienation from God must entail on us a doom to the reality of which we

may only awake in the life beyond. Sin must carry with it in eternity, more consciously than in time, the suffering that is inseparable from it. Besides, there are the benefits which the Gospel brings to men in this present life, which will be found in their full fruition in the life beyond. And, beyond and above all this, the thought of *God's love for His human children*, His eternal purpose for them, His yearning over them, all that He has done in creation and in redemption to win them for Himself, as well as the reality and blessedness of conscious reconciliation with God and of the new life in Christ, ought to be the supreme and sufficient motive for the evangelisation of the world. God works by means for the accomplishment of His purposes, and we are here to be His instruments in this present time. Our failure in this may tell heavily on others, and may lower our own prospects of glory. For the measure of our capacity to enter into glory will be that of our conformity to Christ. Let us add that the thought of the Divine yearning over men should be the strongest ground of our confidence in His continued working to bring all to Himself. We view this great subject too commonly in the light of *man's* interests merely, forgetting that the whole has its beginning and end in the love of God for men, and that it is a matter affecting God as Creator and Redeemer.

Of course, passages may be cited against all this, as others might well be in its favour. Especially there may seem opposed to it the solemn eschatological sayings of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels. But, apart from the questions, how much of these really belong to Jesus, and how far we understand them aright, it must be remembered that it is impossible to form any definite and consistent doctrine of the future from such sayings as are recorded, and that we have no reason to believe that Jesus came to give us supernatural knowledge on the subject. He was true *man*, and seems to have simply employed the language of His people and time. Very often at least, as reported by the synoptists, He spoke as if the Kingdom of God was to be set up on the earth, and eternal life only to be found by entering it. "Eternal (*aionian*) life" was, indeed, the life of the age or æon—the Messianic age, and "eternal (*aionian*) punishment," the punishment of that age. The judgement scene in Matthew xxv. is the Messianic judgement of "the *nations* (τὰ ἔθνη, elsewhere almost invariably translated "Gentiles" and "heathen"), following that of the Jewish people and that of His disciples; and the *sole* determining principle is their kindness towards the Christian believers. Nothing else is taken into account. It is really more suggestive of Jewish Christianity than of Christ Himself. The fire of judgement is kindled

on the earth, but we cannot imagine that He who revealed the loving Father and spoke of His care for the birds of the air, and pictured His yearning over the wanderers from the fold, ever meant that human beings created to be God's children should be cast into and consumed by a literal fire. Rather, if such representations be really His—which there is reason to doubt—we must think of the fire as designed to be destructive of the evil in them. It is worthy of note that none of these pictures are found in St. Luke's Gospel. The scene of the punishment of the selfish rich man is laid in *Hades*, probably *before* the final judgement.[1]

[1] The representation of the judgement in Matthew xxv. has had a very great influence on conceptions of the future, and consequently of the character of God as taught by Christ. But many things suggest the doubt whether we have here Jesus' actual teaching. It is found in this Gospel only, which is widely believed not to be the original form of Matthew's Gospel. It shows many Jewish-Christian features. Of it Professor Bacon remarks: "Matthew closes the whole series of the discourses of Jesus with a group of three parables, developed with great elaboration and rhetorical effect out of relatively slight suggestions, as found elsewhere" (*Making of the New Testament*, p. 150). Apart from questions concerning the eschatology of the Gospels in general, the following features of this particular representation suggest doubt: (1) Jesus nowhere else in His discourses calls Himself "the King." (2) The phrase "the Devil (*diabolos*) and his angels" is not like the language of Jesus. With two exceptions (Matt. xiii. 39; Luke viii. 12) He uses the word *Satan* (or the Evil One), which is also the word in Mark iv. 15, parallel with Luke viii. 12. On the other hand, when Matthew is

Above all, it has to be borne in mind that the Christian *revelation*, such as is stated in these Epistles, is not derived from the *teaching* of Jesus, but from His Person, as its significance came to be understood and interpreted under Divine spiritual influences. No *words* of Jesus (unless all is embraced in that great word "the Father") can give us that conception of the Divine eternal purpose in creation and redemption which these and other Epistles assert as, *e.g.*, where St. Paul says God shall yet be "all in all." Yet this great conception has

narrating he uses *diabolos* (iv. 1, 5, 8, 11), while in the same connection he gives *Satan* as the term employed by Jesus (iv. 10). (3) It is extremely improbable that Jesus would speak of an "eternal fire prepared for the Devil and his angels" as the counterpart of "the Kingdom prepared for the righteous from the foundation of the world," as if God had before His mind something else than the universe created *in Christ*. Is the statement to be taken as a revelation? (4) The principles of the judgement will by no means agree with those in the "Sermon on the Mount"; but are in keeping with Jewish beliefs, which held that charity delivered from Gehenna. No inner qualities are taken into account: nothing save outward acts of kindness to the Christians, who are clearly distinguished from those who are judged. (5) It is difficult to believe that our Lord, who proclaimed man's sonship to God, would address any as "ye cursed"! especially when they were not "workers of iniquity," like those in chapter vii. 23. But it is in keeping with the Jewish attitude towards the Gentiles (τὰ ἔθνη). (6) To share the doom of the Devil and his angels seems far too great a penalty for the omission which is the ground of the condemnation. It is sometimes said that we have here the just doom of selfishness, or want of love,—love being central to the character,—but it is only

been in some sense universally accepted as flowing from the contemplation of the Person and work of Christ. We therefore fall back again on the thought of the creation as conceived "in Christ" and on the purpose of God in Him to reconcile all things to Himself (which certainly includes all moral beings), and on the beliefs which alone seem worthy of God, that the Divine Love is Almighty, and that the Divine Purpose cannot fail. We believe that the Divine creative and redemptive work cannot have been in vain, that since all were representatively

for lack of kindness to suffering Christians—"these My brethren"—they are condemned. It is quite a mistake to see in this picture the general judgement and the commendation of human kindness or unselfishness in general. As Weiss says, "the nations, as such, at the last judgment stand over against the brethren (*i.e.* the fellow-citizens of Jesus), but are, to be sure, only judged on this point, whether they have shown love to these or not" (*Bib. Theology of New Testament*, ii. 291). They might have done all that is mentioned, and yet, according to the general teaching of Christ, have been unfit (as they were) for the Kingdom. Moreover, if it is to be taken literally, how many of us have failed to do the things required, and have thus become subject to the doom depicted! In the opinion of some the *motive* of the representation is the Jewish-Christian insistence on "works." May it not rather be meant to induce the Gentiles to show kindness to the Christians among them? According to Jewish belief, the Gentiles as such were doomed, and had no part in the world to come (or the Kingdom); here an exception is made of those who show charity to the Christians. The basis is probably such sayings of our Lord as we have in Matthew x. 40–42; Mark ix. 41, in which last chapter we see the tendency to amplify threatenings by the addition of vv. 44 and 46, omitted in R.V.

reconciled—made at one with Himself—in Christ, all shall yet be so in actual fact; that the Head of the race shall yet rejoice in a complete Body, and God Himself be "all in all."

It is sometimes said that God is now taking out of the world "a people for Himself." This often seems to be the case; but if so, it is *for service* He is taking them, and in the bringing to God of those who have resisted His grace there is a sphere of action in the very highest form of "glory."

What has been said applies to all moral personalities, whether men or angels, whether they be "things in the heavens or things on the earth," which we take to be simply a general, all-inclusive expression. But there are other things, lower things, belonging to the creation, things inanimate and things animate, although not personal,—in what way can they be reconciled or brought back to God? In the strict moral sense of *reconciliation* the statement cannot apply to them; because they have never got away from God in the sense in which man has. Things in Nature, animate and inanimate, all fulfil their purpose. If there are catastrophes in Nature, they happen under the action of the laws that are necessary for the upholding of the world and of life. If there are wild animals—man-eating

tigers and poisonous snakes, destroying thousands of human beings annually—they are only acting out their instincts under the pressure of hunger or fear. There are aspects of Nature, indeed, which instil feelings of sadness in our hearts. When we witness the sufferings endured by animals, and the intelligence and affection which some of them manifest, along with the treatment they frequently experience at human hands, we cannot help asking whether there is anything in the ultimate purpose of God for *them*? St. Paul, we know, saw the whole creation "groaning and travailing together in pain," and believed that its emancipation would come at "the manifestation of the sons of God." But how he pictured to himself the coming of that redemption we cannot tell—unless it was on a transfigured earth. This view would scarcely meet our questioning, and it may be the same conception that informs the statement in Colossians, as far as it applies to inanimate things and the lower creation. Or it may simply be that, as all things (that is, the universe) were created in Christ, in Him as representing the perfected humanity, the creative Ideal is realised and, in this sense, the "all" is in Him at one with God.

This would leave our questions with respect to the lower animate beings unanswered, and probably there is no answer put within the reach of man.

We can only say that all the life that has appeared on earth has appeared inevitably, according to the necessary laws of life; it has all come in the course of the movement manwards; we owe our own manhood to the process. It is for man to minimise animal suffering as far as may be, and to destroy such forms of life as now serve no useful purpose but are in many instances inimical to man. The only further suggestion we can make is, that for the creatures there may be (as the words of Jesus in Luke xii. 6, 7; Matt. x. 29–31 seem to imply) some hope as yet "hidden"—a "mystery" still unrevealed, which may apply to them as they approach to personality.

In the creation, as it appears, there has been much suffering. But either there must be the actual creation with all the suffering we deplore, or no creation at all. The pessimist thinks it would have been better had there been none. But the Christian view is that the culmination in man as a partaker in the Divine Life was a worthy ideal; nay, that the creation was a necessity for the Love that God is, and which seeks to impart itself; that the creation itself was founded in a Divine Self-sacrifice. For, as already said, the Love that sought to impart itself must, in order so to do, pass out from itself in a Divine *kenōsis* to become the potency of the creation—which we conceive as an eternal process—and when the creative Ideal was reached in Christ, the Divine

Love again gave itself to *redeem* the world and bring all things back to itself in that eternal unity which is represented for all and made possible for all in Christ. If, however, we were to think of the suffering creation as something wholly apart from God, we should fail to feel satisfaction. But if we believe that God is immanent in the creation as well as transcendent of it; if we believe with Jesus that "not even a sparrow can fall to the ground without our Father," then we see that God Himself suffers with and for His creation. We see Him in Christ taking even our sins on Himself; for God was *in* Christ, and assuredly He did not leave His Son to suffer alone. All was "of God," as St. Paul affirms: all *is* of Him, and all shall yet be well. The grand vision which the Seer of Patmos beheld shall yet be realised: "And every created thing which is in the heaven and on the earth and under the earth, and on the sea, and all things that are in them, heard I saying, Unto Him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, be the blessing and the honour and the glory and the dominion for ever and ever" (Rev. v. 13; cf. iv. 11).

The view of the eternal purpose which we derive from these Epistles is of great practical importance, and it is because of this that we have sought to give full expression to it: "the secret things belong unto

the Lord our God; but the things that are revealed belong unto us and to our children." Nothing is more urgently needed for a real revival of religion, and even of religious interest, than a right and worthy conception of God and of His purpose in our creation, as His love and purpose are revealed in Christ. A "religion" which does not rise in love to *God* is no true religion at all; and how are we to love God if we do not see Him to be lovable, and that above all others? If human experience is to be confined to the present very uncertain life, so overclouded by sorrow, so full of suffering, and always ending in death, it will be, for many, impossible to believe in God at all. As it is, many have ceased *really* to believe. The great majority never seriously think of God. To others who still in some sense believe in "God" He is, if more than a name, Creator and Judge—a Being afar off, unrelated to them—for "Father" means little to such—who will bless them if they believe certain things and act in a certain way, not very clearly defined, perhaps; but who, should they fail so to believe and live, will care no more for them, but will banish them irrevocably from His sight. It is simply impossible for men and women, as they are in the world, to be *attracted* to such a God. And if we cannot attract men to God, our religion has lost its power. If they cannot be attracted to God, how are they to be saved—in this

life, at any rate? *Fear* for long moved some, but that influence has largely passed away. We need to see how much there is that we may reasonably *fear* if we live not in harmony with God and His eternal laws,—for it is not a merely good-natured God that can save us, or that can be God at all. God's love is *holy* love, and "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." But we need a truer, worthier conception of God—one without self-contradiction in it. It may be said: "Preach Christ!"—Christ who is surely attractive, Christ who said, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself." Christ *is* preached, but even His attractiveness as a spiritual Saviour seems to be no longer felt by tens of thousands of people. But are we sure that we *are* preaching *Christ*—the Christ of these Epistles, the revelation of a God who has created *all* in the Ideal of Sonship to Himself, and whose eternal purpose is to reconcile all to Himself in Him in whom we have been created—who has already done it representatively in Christ and His Cross, and will through Him effect it ultimately in all? A God, the motive of whose creation, as well as its Ideal, is the Love which He *is*, which therefore must yet subdue all things to Himself? If we see God to have this loving purpose concerning us, and realise what He has done, in the creation and in Christ, His Cross and His Spirit, to make it effectual; if we see *this* to be the purpose

of our creation and *the meaning of our life*; and if we believe that this God is by His Spirit actually within us, it will surely tend, not only to brighten our outlook on the world, but to make us ashamed of our sin and opposition or indifference, and of any lower life, draw our hearts into unison with our God, and make us glad, self-sacrificing workers in His great world-cause. It will deliver us from all possibility of resting in a merely self-regarding salvation.

The need for a right conception of *God* is, we repeat, the great need of the world to-day—a world in which men and women everywhere are becoming indifferent to all vital religion. The old way of representing God and His relation to men in respect of their destiny has manifestly proved ineffective with the greater number. It is not seriously believed or preached to-day. The Church finds herself without any definite teaching regarding the future, and as a consequence the future itself has become very dim and uncertain. But if the Christian Church were as with one voice to proclaim God and His purpose as stated in these Epistles; if she were to show how the Gospel of redemption is grounded in an earlier Gospel of creation; how men and women are *all*, not only redeemed in Christ, but *created* in Him, with their destiny to be conformed to Him as the first-born of the Sons of God, it would have the effect which a real Gospel of God to men is bound to have.

Men simply could not be indifferent to that which so concerned their very *life*. Instead of confirming them in sin, it would be the most powerful agency to turn them from sin to the God who so loved them, and to whose love they must sooner or later submit—with a lasting and unhappy memory of their persistence in evil, or indifference to such a God.

In any case, it is a serious question for the Church whether she is proclaiming the Gospel of God's eternal purpose in all its fulness "as it has been revealed to His apostles and prophets" in Jesus Christ. We cannot better conclude than by adopting for ourselves the prayer of St. Paul for the Ephesian Christians, that "Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith—that, being rooted and grounded in love, we may be strong to apprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that we may be filled unto all the fulness of God."

INDEX

Animal world, 225.
  words of Jesus concerning, 226.
At-one-ment, 100 f., 105, 106, 112.
Attraction to God, 228.

Bacon, Prof., 4, 221 (note).
Balfour, Hon. G. W., 198.
Bergson, 73.
Bodies, 202. See *Embodiment*.
Body of Christ, 122 f.
  the Church as, 124, 158 f.
  need for, 170.
Bosanquet, 107 (note).

Carus, Dr. Paul, 134 (note).
Chrēstotes, 148.
Christ, revealer of man, 21.
  as the true man, 22, 24, 66, 80.
  the living, 41 f., 119 f., 126, 128.
  Person of, 45 f., 78, 119 f.
  Ideal and Goal of Creation, 53 f., 66, 80, etc.
  in relation to this world, 56 f.
  in relation to the Universe, 63 f.
  God in human form, 52, 60, 79, etc.
  humanity of, 62, etc.
  continued life of, 67. See *the living*.
  mode of Incarnation, 68 f.
  personal life of, 77 f., 79.
  and ourselves, 79.
  reconciliation of all things in, 98 f.
  sacrifice of, 103, 105.
  Head of the race, 53, 89, 119, 172, 201.
Christ, Head of the Church, 120.
  of all powers, 63, 89, 117, 211.
  the glorified, 122, 123, 126, 128, etc.
  in God, 128, 129 f.
  why we need, 129 f.
  the Church His Body, 158 f.
  type of the future life, 189 f.
  Universal Saviour, 210 f.
  Love of, 215.
  and the creatures, 226.
  preaching, 229.
  the historical, 26, 152 f.
  See also *Incarnation*, *Resurrection*.
Christianity, practical, 112, 113, 151, 167, 173, 180.
  all things serve, 90.
Church, the Body of Christ, 158 f.
  Ideally, 161, 165.
  Unity of the, 163 f.
  in relation to the world, 170 f.
  social mission of, 173.
Churches, union of, 165.
  what they need, 174. 175 f.
Clarke, Dr. W. N., 218.
Colossians, 3.
Colossians and Ephesians, 1 f.
Comparative religion, 129, 130.
Consciousness, 186.
Continuity of God's working, 57, 70 f., 81.
  human, 84.
  of nature, 85.
Converts, early Christian, 142 f.
Cosmic Christ, the, 53 f., 63, 89.

Creation, in Christ, 53, 66, 103, 105, 131, 205, 215, 229, 230.
Christ the Ideal of, 53 f., 201, 226, etc.
and Redemption, 54.
Divine conception of, 61, 226.
return to God, 99, 103, 204 f.
ultimate issue, 206.
suffering in, 226.
necessity for a, 226.

Dale, Dr., 216.
Darwin, 91.
Davidson, Dr. Samuel, 26.
Deity of Christ, 47 f.
modes of statement, 50, 51.
See also *Christ*.
"Departed," the, 191.
Destiny, man's, revealed in Christ, 28 f., 182 f.
the revelation in the Life, 36 f.
Development hereafter, 214.
Doketism, 83.
Doncaster, 92, 93.
Doxa, 198 f.
Du Bose, 66.

Election, 213.
of the Gentiles, 12, 213.
Embodiment, spiritual, 192, 195, 197, 202.
End, the, 227.
Ephesians, 3.
Eschatology of Gospels, 220 f., 221 (note).
Eternal punishment, 220.
Eternal Purpose, the, 12, 13, 82, 88, 204 f., 214, 216, 223, 227.
Fulfilment of, 204 f., 223.
Life, 37, 220, etc.
Eternity and human life, 185, 208.
Ethical life, 59.
the Divine, 83.
Evolution, 57, 65, 72, 77, 83, 86, 93, 201.
mind and, 72, 187.
spiritual, 76 f., 82.
Eucken, 89.

Faith, need for, 35, 37, 188.
verification of, 41 f.
Fear, 118, 229.
Fichte, I. A., 187, 193.
Forgiveness, 105, 153.
Form, spiritual, 128, 196.
Fourth Gospel, 49, 50, 55, 69.
Fowler, Prof. Ward, 140.
Freedom, human, 101.
Christian, 115 f.
Fulness of God in Christ, 119 f.
Future Life, 33, 182 f., 185, 208, 211, 230.
mode of, 189, 191, 193, 195, 200.

Garvie, Dr., 61.
Glory, the hope of and life in, 182 f., 184, 190, 193, 212, 214; the word, 198 f.
Gnosticism, 2, 121.
God, in relation to Christ, 47 f., 56, 129 f.
what we can know of Him, 55, 56, 59, 66, 131.
in relation to the Creation, 53, 56, 98, 201, 204, 206, 216, 219, 226, 229.
manifestation of, 59, 61, etc.
continuous working of, 57, 70, 74 f., 81.
as incarnate in Christ, 62, etc.
as Spirit, 81.
act of Reconciliation, 105.
sacrifice, 83, 106, 226.
Omnipresence, 129.
Immanence, 76, etc.
Transcendency, 70, 75, 131.
and presence of Christ, 133 f.
coming to, 133.
Ethical Personality, 83, 134.
love for His human children, 219.
need for a worthy conception of, 227 f.
Goodrich, E. S., 72 (note), 93, 96.
Goodwin, Dr. T., 126.
Gospel, the universal, 108, 207.
the needed, 7, 230.

Harnack, 31.
Hartmann, 201.

Head of Humanity, 119, 171. See *Christ.*
Hereafter, belief in a, 33. See *Future Life.*
Heredity and the Incarnation, 71, 85.
note on theories of, 91 f.
Hill, J. Arthur, 7.
Holy Spirit, 75, 77, 124, 135, 154, 229.
Hope, the only, 199, 202.
Humanity, perfection of, 16.
destiny, 28 f., 204 f.

Ideal of the Creation, in Christ, 17, 21, 53, 57, 58, 103, 143, etc.
its realisation, 68 f., 204 f.
the Christian, 143, etc.
Immanence, 70, 77, 86, 131, 227.
Immortality. See *Future Life.*
Inanimate things and reconciliation, 224.
Incarnation involved in the Creation, 52, 54, etc.
mode of the, 68 f., 82 f.
in New Test., 69.
culmination of the Divine creative and educative action, 70, 81, etc.
advantages of the view, 81 f.
and Science, 70, 75, 81, 85.
Industrial Strife, 113.
Inspiration, 2.
Intervention, Divine, 81.
Israel, spiritual development of, 59, 74 f., 86.
culmination in Christ, 75, etc.
contact with other peoples, 78.

James, Prof., 20.
Jew, the, and Christ, 86.
Judgement, the representation of, in Matt. xxv., 220 and note 221.

Kenōsis, 61, 82, 201, 226.
Kingdom, the, moral significance, 184.

Life, of the world, 57, 59.
the new, 140 f.
Life, the Christian, 141 f., 151, 155, 177, etc.
Spirit of, 159 f., 171.
future. See *Future Life.*
meaning of, 229, 230.
Lightfoot, Bishop, on Christ and the Creation, 54.
Livingstone, 138.
Logos doctrine, 50, 66.
Love, 65, 106, 112, 141, 144, 156, 168 f., 215, 226, 229.
amongst Christians, 167 f.
of Christ, 215.

MacDougal, Prof., 96.
McDougal, W., 73, 187.
Man, revealed in Christ, 21 f., 55, 67, 177, 189, etc.
reconciliation of, to man, 108 f.
Mankind and the Eternal Purpose, 13. See *Eternal Purpose.*
Martineau, James, 31, 40.
Matthew xxv. 31–46. See *Judgement.*
Max Nordeau, 95.
Mediation, 136.
Meyer, Dr., 216.
Ministries under Christ, 193, 194.
Miraculous, the physical, 51, 84.
birth, the, 69.
Missionary function, 132, 171.
Montifiori, C. G., 51.
Morality, 141.
Motives for Evangelisation, 218.
Mystery of the Gospel, 5.
Mystery, the revelation of the, 11 f.
of human life, 15; revealed in Christ, 17, 21 f.
Mysticism, 130 (note).

Nature and reconciliation, 224.
aspects of, 225.
Need, the present, 7, 167, 174 f., 230.

Oiktirmos, 147, 148.
Omnipotence, 215.
Organism, of Christ, importance of, 70, 77, 79 f.
the human, how formed, 71, 84, 186.

Orr, Dr. James, 73.
Owen, Dr. John, 125, 127.

Paul, St., 2, 4, 6, 14, 225, etc.
his Divine Philosophy, 4.
Peace through the Cross, 104, 110, 112, 113.
People, a, for service, 224.
Perfecting, 202, 211, 214.
Perfection of Humanity, 16.
"Person," 61, 133.
Person of Christ, 45 f., 77, 128, etc.
Personalities, the Divine aim, 74.
Personality, spiritual, 72, 185, 189, 202.
Philosophy of the Universe, a Divine, 4, 6, 85, 90.
Pleonexia, 146.
Plērōma, 98, 120, 121, 159.
Practice, Christian, 180. See *Christianity*.
Prayers, 138.
Preaching "Christ," 229, 231.
Pre-existence in Christ, 52, 56 f., 60, 71.
Providence, a particular, 194.
Psychical acquisitions, 94.
Research, 33, 188.
Psychology, 187.

Reason, 10; in life, 16, 86; and faith, 36.
Recognition hereafter, 196, 197.
Reconciliation of all things in Christ, 98 f., 204 f.
of the Universe, 99, 108, 205.
of man to God, 103 f., 107, 108.
of man to man, 108 f.
of Nature, etc., 224.
Redemption, 99, 100, 226, 227.
Religion, 24.
all-embracing, 179, 180.
comparative, 130.
true, 228 f.
the Roman, 140.
Religious revival, 9, 24, 180, 228.
Renan, 184 (note).
Representation in Christ, 99, 104, 120, 214, 229.
Resurrection of Christ, belief in, 28, 39, 197.
present relation to, 29 f., 44.
of Christians, 182.
universal, 184 (note).
Revelation, how made, 19 f., 36 f., 55, 59, 131, 222.
how its truth recognised, 25.
of the Future, 209, 220.

Sacrifice of Christ, 103, 105.
Divine. See *God*.
Salvation, meaning, 23.
the consciousness of, 43.
Divine purpose of, 209, 211.
after death, 214, etc.
Saviour, the universal, 211.
Science and Christianity, 9, 51, 68 f., 75, 85, 91 f.
Selbie, Principal, 9.
Self, the, 23, 101, 114, 117.
Service in "Glory," 193, 212, 214, 219.
a people for, 224.
Sin, possibility and reality of, 101 f.
punishment of, 217, 218.
Slavery, 151.
Smith, Dr. W. C., 107.
Social Salvation, 172, 173.
Socialism, *Christian*, 170.
Sōmatikōs, 121 f., 125.
Son of God, 46, 50, 58, 61, 127, 133, 201.
Sonship, the Ideal, 58, 61, 127.
in Christ, 61, etc.
Soul and Body, 72, 185, 186, 187.
Spencer, H., 91.
Spirit of Christ, 114, 158 f., 173.
Spiritual powers, 117, 195.
Suffering and sacrifice, 107, 226.
Survival, possibility of, 185 f.

Ta ethnē, 220, 222 (note).
Ta panta, 205.
Taylor, Isaac, 9.
Telepathy, 197.
Transcendency. See *God*.
Trinity, 134, and (note).
Truth, the, how recognised, 25 f.

Union of Churches, 165.
Uniqueness of Christ, 52, 79, 80.
Unity of the Church, 163 f.
of the Spirit, 164, 165 f., 167 f.
Universal and final religion, the, 88, 89.
Universality of the Divine purpose and its accomplishment, 204 f., 216.
Universe, Christ in relation to the, 63 f.
reconciliation of, 99, 205.
Unsaved, the, Divine relation to, 214 f.

Verification of faith, 42 f.

War and Christianity, 111 f.
Watson, Ed. B., 96.
Watson, H. B. Marriott, 64, 65.
Watson, J. S. B., 97 (note).
Weinel, Prof., 26.
Weismann, 91 f.
Weiss, 205, 223 (note).
Westcott, 159, 165, 166.
Wider reference, the, 204 f.
Williams, Cambridge Greek Test., 3.
World, the Gospel for the, 13, 15, 227 f.
an organism, 57.
Christ in relation to the. See *Christ*.
the Church in relation to the, 170.
life in, 177.
Worry, 118.
Worship, Christian, 176.

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